MASS MEDIA AND EDUCATION

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MASS MEDIA AND EDUCATION

The Fifty-third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education

PART II

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Edited by

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Editor's Preface

Many members of the teaching profession are acquainted with the Society's Forty-eighth Yearbook, Part I, *Audio-visual Materials of Instruction.* As its name implies, this volume was designed to help teachers and supervisors of instruction improve teaching procedures through the wider use of audio-visual materials in the classroom. The present volume, *Mass Media and Education,* is likewise concerned with the learning experiences of school children and with problems pertaining to the enrichment of classroom instruction through the introduction of and emphasis on audio-visual materials. But the nature and effects of such materials, as treated in the present yearbook, are also considered with respect to their role in the functional operations of society at large. Accordingly, while the educational implications of the effects of mass communications are appropriately recognized, the content and effects of messages disseminated through the mass media are viewed in light of their social values, as well. That is, consideration is given to the influence of mass-media messages presented to children of school age, whether received in connection with school activities or in some phase of out-of-school life.

From the point of view of the service function of mass communications, the yearbook evaluates the present uses of mass media in relation to the generally accepted standards of democratic procedures in the administration of an American social institution or business enterprise. In keeping with this concept of the role of the mass media in American society, interpretive and illustrative materials are introduced to indicate the nature and influence of the commonly available media. Suggestions are presented on how to use mass communications to promote both social and educational objectives. The volume will prove to be a valuable guide to parents and teachers in the planning of social and educational experiences of children and youth. It will also serve the various cultural and vocational activities of adult-education groups.

NELSON B. HENRY

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

EDGAR DALE

Purpose and Scope of the Yearbook

This book is prepared with teachers, parents, supervisors, principals, and superintendents in mind. Its title, *Mass Media and Education,* suggests that mass media play a role in education and that these media must, therefore, be looked upon with concern and respect. We are concerned with these mass media as influences arising in the out-of-school life of the child or youth and in the normal experiences of the adult.

Mass media are defined as those instruments of communication which can convey identical messages to large numbers of persons who are often physically separated. The identical messages may be printed, as in newspapers, books, pamphlets, comics, and magazines. They may be on film, as in filmstrips and motion pictures. The mass media also include television, radio, and recordings. We do not use the words *mass media* in the sense of media for the masses.

This yearbook does not deal with educational films or radio and television programs prepared directly for the schools. It deals, rather, with mass media which usually are not prepared directly for educational use but which do have some effects that teachers and parents must take into account.

We shall not, however, neglect the formal use of *some* of these materials in schools and colleges. The mass media, such as radio or television, may sometimes provide recordings, kinescopes, or feature films which can be used in the school. This, however, is a residual use and is not our primary concern.

Our aim in this volume is:

1. To give background on ownership, control, regulation, and purposes of mass media so as to be able to appraise their place in modern

American society.

2. To examine the content and influence of communication by mass media in so far as these are relevant to the educational activities of teachers, parents, and public opinion leaders.
3. To theorize on broad philosophical and educational grounds about the influence of the mass media and to present specific research data on such influence.
4. To offer suggestions to parents and teachers on how to use the mass media fruitfully, with special emphasis on how to develop a discriminating taste.
5. To discuss the obligations of the citizen in relation to the mass media.

Social Effects of the Mass Media

If this book is worth the time it takes a busy teacher to read it, then it must make a difference in his teaching. If a school executive takes time to read this book, then its content ought to make a difference as he plans and carries out the work of the school in co-operation with teachers, parents, supervisors, principals, and members of the community. The thesis of the authors of this yearbook and of the directors of the National Society for the Study of Education, who sponsor it, can be simply stated as follows: The mass media make a real difference in the way we all live. As Gilbert Seldes has pointed out:

> Television will have an effect on your lives even if you never own a TV set and never see or hear a broadcast. The fatal weakness of all efforts to control the excesses and correct the errors of television in the United States is the attitude of people who think themselves untouched because they themselves never look at inferior programs or never see television at all. But there is no immunity—there is no place to hide.
>
> So with parents whose children are never permitted to watch the sadism and horror of the 150 murders which infest our television screens each week. They imagine themselves safe, but you cannot buy immunity by turning away from what you do not like. The fact is, the one child who does not see horror programs lives and will live in the world created by the fifty who do.[1]

There are special reasons why we, as teachers, as principals, as superintendents, or as parents, should be concerned with the mass media. The child lives as a unitary person, not as a person having

[1] News item in the November, 1952, "Bulletin of the National Association for Better Radio and Television" (882 Victoria Ave., Los Angeles, California).

a school personality and an out-of-school personality. He brings his out-of-school experiences to the school. Thus, the television program dealing with science which is seen at home becomes relevant to the school class on science. He may see on the television screen photographic slides of cancerous cell tissue, he may see graphic demonstrations of Mendelian inheritance, he may "visit" an important science laboratory almost anywhere in the world. The current-events broadcast over the radio may be useful in a social-studies class. The regular newspaper or the thirty-five-cent, paper-bound classic may supply items of information fruitful for use within the school. The child living a fantasy life of cowboys and Indians, conditioned by television or comic books, brings this fantasy life to school. The child who follows the big-league batting averages in the newspapers or on television can carry this interest and enthusiasm for baseball into the arithmetic class.

Sometimes the mass media may work at cross purposes with objectives the schools and parents are trying to achieve. The motion picture, for example, may unrealistically dramatize such conflicts in values as: selfishness *vs.* co-operation; lawful solution to crime *vs.* solutions outside the law; sex as noble human trait *vs.* vulgar exploitation. The television screen may present cruelty and trickery as the norm; indeed, as admirable.

The child spends more time with the mass media than with any other voluntary educational agency, and these experiences with mass media may be affecting his stock of information, his attitudes, his play patterns, his speech, or his choice of occupation. We shall show in later chapters that the mass media are influential, that they do have the power to change information, skills, attitudes, conduct, and behavior. This does not mean that these effects are easily secured, for they usually are not. Further, these effects may be both good and bad.

Responsibilities of Civic Groups

As teachers and as citizens, we face an inescapable obligation to determine the meaning and influences of the mass media. Responsible experts disagree on these effects, and this should make us cautious in forming conclusions. For example, Josette Frank notes the divergence of viewpoints with respect to the comics:

Of deeper concern, and much more difficult to define, is the question of the emotional impact of the comics: Do they, with their emphasis on violence and the biff-bang method of settling affairs, overstimulate children's aggressions, cause tension and fears, and even overt acts of violence? Again we find a wide divergence of opinion among people who work with children on the level of their emotional needs. In a survey of psychiatric opinion in *Child Study* (Spring, 1948) the variety of response to this question was marked.

"Comics of the 'thriller' variety," said Dr. Augusta Alpert, "make aggression too easy and too colorful, and in that way threaten the eruption of the child's own precariously controlled aggressive impulses. Fear inevitably follows in their wake. If these experiences were *safety* valves, in the form of vicarious discharge of aggression, nightmares following them would not be so frequently reported."

At the other extreme we find Dr. Lauretta Bender's view that "much of what children find in the comics deals with their own unconscious fantasies. It is possible (though I cannot say this with certainty) that they need this material as a pattern for their dreams, to give them content with which to dream out their problems. As in radio serials, the continued stories give them confidence. For here are patterns of life that can be trusted to come out all right.

"Comics constitute experience with activity, motility, movement. Their heroes overcome time and space. This gives children a sense of release rather than fear. Sound effects—in the comics as well as on the radio—horses' hooves coming and going, and other sounds denoting motion, are important in the sensory education of our children. . . ."

There was general agreement, however, among those interviewed, that differences among children must be considered in relation to comics. "There is a varying degree of tolerance for excitement," said Dr. David M. Levy, "and this tolerance varies also with age. The same experience that is tolerable at seven may be unendurable at three. Regardless of age some children, for reasons still unknown, can stand very little excitement. For them, excitement must be carefully measured. Some children, on the other hand, crave excitement and become addicts, especially to radio and comics. There are many reasons for this kind of escape. In the main there is an impoverishment of interest in intellectual and social activities." [2]

We should, as thoughtful people, avoid giving unsubstantiated opinions. We are not clear, as yet, as to what effect television is having upon, let us say, reading tastes. Perhaps they are being improved. Actually, our concern is not merely with reading tastes, listening tastes, or television tastes as ends in themselves. We want

[2] Josette Frank, "Some Questions and Answers for Teachers and Parents," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, XXIII (December, 1949), 208-9.

also to help people master the values, the insights, and the understandings which will enable them to live realistically—not in fantasy—in a natural world. Even if we find that television viewers read less, quantitatively, this fact alone may not be important. We ask rather: Is the *quality* of their reading improving or deteriorating and what effect is this change having upon the lives of children, young people, and adults?

As we look at the educational possibilities of the mass media we see that many choices are available. We can look at a magazine, turn on the radio or the television set, go to a movie, read a twenty-five-cent book, or listen to long-playing records. Teachers and parents raise many questions at this point. They ask:

Do these activities of looking, listening, or viewing absorb a disproportionate amount of the time of children and young people? Is the emphasis upon sensation, drama, and emotion likely to result in a dulling of finer sensibilities? What is the effect upon general behavior patterns? Will the new mass media develop a richer understanding of reality and a greater willingness to face it, or will they tend to make us retreat more and more into a world of fantasy?

Will the many and varied programs cause excessive stereotyping and standardizing of behavior, or will they offer a greater variety of possibilities for people in music, public affairs, news, and recreational hobbies? How will the programs affect living? Will the student be less concerned with the natural world about him and retreat more and more into a symbolic world? Another very real question to which we should address ourselves is this: Have the interests of children and young people for adventure, excitement, and hero worship changed over the ages, or are we now merely seeing old behavior in a new dress?

Is there a counterpart of modern media in the lurid folk tale, the blood-and-thunder penny dreadful? If so, does such content supply an age-old emotional need? The mass media are, after all, only vehicles, devices, means. What messages do they carry? What ends do they serve? It is easy to make judgments pro and con, but, as noted above, it is very hard to give proof.

Our key issue is this: How shall we, whether we are listeners, readers, or viewers, react to the mass media? Are we to be actors

or merely to be acted upon? Are we to be passively molded by a small number of people who direct the mass media, or is the one who receives the message going to be in charge? Indeed, who really is in charge? Is it a public, sometimes well-informed and sometimes uninformed? a mass? Are our tastes at the mercy of a benevolent despotism? Is there real competition in the mass media? If not, how can it be secured? That the public may passively accept what it gets was pointed out by H. G. Wells in 1926:

> There is still a delusion which many businessmen share, that it is the public that determines the pattern and gets the key of the press for which it contributes its pennies. This is no more true of the newspaper than it is of the theater or the cinema. The role of the public in these affairs is to endure. You can feed the public anything you like on all these things, within the limits of its endurance. It is helpless against you. Its only possible veto is to die, riot en masse, be ostentatiously sick, or abstain from what you give it. Short of these extremes, it must accept. It may grumble, but it must accept. . . .
>
> The only possible effective control of all these processes of publicity, so that this shall be given and that withheld, is to be found in the hands of the active proprietors and directors of the great newspapers themselves, and in the advertisers who sustain them. If these people choose to give the public well-written daily or weekly papers, responsible and large-minded, the public will get them, but it will get them in no other way.
>
> The public does not make the newspaper nor the cinema, but on the other hand the press and the cinemas do more and more make the public.[3]

Some people believe that increasing social responsibility of the publisher is the chief remedy for our problem. This issue is discussed in chapter ii.

The issue of monopoly was raised in the 1952 presidential campaign, and Sigma Delta Chi, a national journalistic fraternity, first planned to study the role of the press in the campaign. Later it decided to abandon the project, noting the complexity of the problem.

Certainly on complex problems, such as these, broad national policies need to be developed. Significant political, business, and governmental issues are involved. Yet as citizens we do not need to feel as helpless as did H. G. Wells even in 1926. The problem of the

[3] H. G. Wells, *The World of William Clissold*, pp. 605-7.

free flow of ideas has been with us a long time, as is well documented in the several chapters of this yearbook.

The Role of the Teacher in Relation to Mass Communication

The committee preparing this yearbook believes that the teacher can play a responsible role in influencing choices in the mass media. Thus, we shall emphasize the responsibility of the teacher for guiding the interests, the outlook, and tastes of children and youth, and, where appropriate, of the adults within the community. Certainly such guidance is important, and we note in chapters x, xi, and xii how the teacher can help develop discriminating tastes in reading, listening, and viewing.

Second, we stress the role of the teacher as a person. In chapter viii, for example, we outline in some detail the ways in which a teacher exercises his obligation to be a cultivated person, to associate with excellence in the mass media.

The third responsibility of the teacher is to be an active citizen. This point is elaborated in chapter xii. Let us see how this has worked with the newest mass medium—television. Some of this responsibility, as citizens, was discharged when teachers, superintendents, principals, college presidents, and others worked together during 1950 and 1951 to get the Federal Communications Commission to allocate television channels for educational purposes. Two hundred and forty-two channels were so allocated, and it was a tribute to the citizenship of these persons that the allocations were secured. The channels could not have been secured without their help.

Yet the teacher, as citizen, must realize that this is only a partial victory. It is necessary that the teacher, as citizen, now help stimulate national thinking in regard to the kinds of program that should be available on the air—not only on the educational television stations noted above but also on commercial television stations. We must not forget that television licenses are granted to both educational and commercial stations for the public convenience, interest, and necessity. This standard must constantly be used in evaluating television and radio programs.

The teacher as citizen not only has a responsibility to see that excellent content is made available on the air but also to see that the air, the film, the press are free—that the First Amendment is carried out. Not only must there be freedom of speech but there must be freedom to listen. Not only must there be freedom to write but there must be freedom to read. Not only must there be freedom to talk but there must be freedom to meet and to discuss. Civil liberties are an inescapable part of the intelligent, discriminating use of mass media. What good will it do to have excellent programs if they are not permitted on the air, if controversy on the air or in the public prints is not encouraged? We must never forget what Jefferson said: "Error of opinion may be tolerated if reason is free to combat it."

Finally, the yearbook makes the point that no teacher in our schools can teach with full effectiveness unless he has a keen understanding of the role of the mass media in the life of his students. We believe that there are significant experiences to be secured in the press, in comic strips, in motion pictures, and in television. We believe that it is possible by some of the techniques suggested in this volume for the teacher to make such experiences unusually rich ones in the learning of the children and young people.

This is no easy task and the authors of this yearbook do not want to make it seem so. Margaret Mead put it like this: "Teachers who never heard of a radio until they were grown up have to cope with children who have never known a world without television."[4]

Although we occasionally decry these swift changes, nevertheless, life today is not boring; it is often exciting, and sometimes it is downright inspiring.

Harold H. Fisher points out that our colleges and universities have been remiss in their study and use of the mass media:

> Totalitarians, whose purpose is not to educate but to indoctrinate, have shown originality and great skill in the use of these media for the evil purpose of propagating lies and warping minds. The American entertainment industry has a record of notable, if uneven, achievements in the use of these media. The universities have occasionally given a perfunctory recognition of the existence of the new media as features of contemporary life about which students may learn something if they

[4] Margaret Mead, *The School in American Culture*, p. 33. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951

are sufficiently curious. But, in general, and with some notable exceptions, the universities do not encourage the exploration and exploitation of the media except for vocational purposes. Yet these media, used with imagination and sound scholarship, offer a most effective means of spreading knowledge of the ways of life of the peoples of the world, particularly those of Asia and Africa and the Middle East whom we have neglected in our curricula and of whom we know so little.

So long as scholars, administrators, and the public regard efforts to improve the traditional methods of instruction as futile or shocking or subversive; so long as educators regard motion pictures, radio, and television as beneath their dignity; so long as institutions of higher and secondary education do not make budgetary provision for their use, we shall be failing to take full advantage of one of the greatest potential assets of mass education.[5]

The responsibility of seeing that the mass media serve the public good is no simple one. But it is a responsibility that the teacher as teacher, as citizen, as person cannot shrink. We hope that, in the pages that follow, this task is made both clear and interesting.

[5] Harold H. Fisher, "America and the World Scene, 1950-2000," *California Journal of Secondary Education,* XXVII (October, 1952), 335.

SECTION I

WHAT ARE THE MASS MEDIA FOR?

CHAPTER II

The Role of Mass Communication in American Society

FRED S. SIEBERT

Relation of the Mass Media to Social Organization

Communication is the cement which gives cohesion to social groups. Mass communication supplies the same type of cohesion for populous and complex societies. Without the services performed by the mass media, our social, political, and economic structures would lose the ability to perform their functions in today's highly integrated and interdependent society.

The functions and control of the mass media of communication in any organized society are inextricably bound up with the basic theories, both political and economic, which underlie that society. The functions which the mass media perform, the purposes for which they are used, and the controls which are imposed upon them are, by and large, determined by the fundamental political and economic principles which provide the foundations for the society in which these media operate. Thus, the purposes of motion pictures in Russia, of newspapers in Argentina, and of radio in the United States are conditioned by the philosophies which support the prevailing social structures of these countries.

The Role of Communication in Different Forms of Society

Four distinguishable theories of the functions of mass media form the basis for the communications patterns of modern society. The oldest, the authoritarian theory, has had the widest acceptance historically. Second, the libertarian philosophy of freedom of expression, developed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is the foundation of our modern American mass-communications system. Marxist philosophy has supplied the third theory, one which

operates in communist countries. A fourth theory, that of social responsibility, has been developed in the twentieth century, and more experience is needed to determine whether its innovations can be grafted onto the libertarian doctrine. Each of these four concepts of the functions of mass media—authoritarian, libertarian, Marxist, and social responsibility—will be discussed briefly.

AUTHORITARIAN THEORY OF THE FUNCTIONS OF MASS MEDIA

Although some of the mass media such as radio and television broadcasting are products of the twentieth century, the older forms, such as pamphlets, books, newspapers, and periodicals, have experienced a long historical development. The first use of the early printed media of general circulation occurred soon after the invention of printing. During controversies of the Reformation in England, Henry VIII made shrewd use of the printed word in carrying out his religious and political purposes.

The functions of the press were simple and clear to the Tudor monarchs of the sixteenth century. *The function of the printed media was to support and advance the policies of government as determined by the political machinery then in operation.* This theory, identified in England as the Tudor-Stuart theory of the function of the press, was a natural complement of the basic political philosophy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Crown, assisted by its advisors, determined basic policies; the subjects supported these policies. Whenever a serious conflict arose between Crown and subject, the only way out was an assassination or a revolution. In such a context the press was an instrument for implementing government policy.

Both Tudor and Stuart monarchs maintained that the printing press in theory belonged to the office of king and as such owed a duty to support the royal program. In practice, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century monarchs permitted private ownership of the printing press as a special privilege for which the private owner acknowledged an obligation to the Crown. A mutually acceptable partnership was established under which the government granted and protected the monopolistic position of the privileged printers who in return for this grant and protection obligated themselves to support government policies.

This system of press function and control flourished in England for almost two hundred years, or until shortly after the political revolution of 1688. Its abandonment was not caused by any inherent defects in the system itself but by the changed political and economic basis of the society within which it functioned. The development of religious freedom, the growth in political democracy as represented by the increased power of Parliament, the expansion of free trade, and the acceptance of the principles of laissez-faire economics, all provided a climate in which the old Tudor-Stuart theory of the function of the press no longer could flourish.

This first and earliest concept of the function of the mass media is one which has had the widest and longest acceptance throughout the world. It has formed the basis for the press systems of many nations and continues to operate today in many sections of the globe. Under this concept the press operates to support the existing centers of power in the state, and, while it functions as a private economic enterprise, it owes its privilege of existence to the centers of political power.

THE LIBERTARIAN THEORY

During the eighteenth century, a competing theory of the function of the press arose, first in England and then on the American continent. The libertarian concept of the relation of the mass media to society can trace its lineage back to beginnings in the seventeenth century, particularly in England during the Commonwealth when the Levelers proposed a system in which the press should be independent of civil authority. The main impetus for the new concept, however, grew out of the philosophy of the "enlightenment" of the eighteenth century. Man was considered to be a rational being, endowed with certain inherent natural rights. Among these rights was the pursuit of truth, and any power which interfered with this pursuit, even though it emanated from civil or religious authority, should be curtailed.

John Milton laid the groundwork for this rationalistic philosophy in his eloquent plea for the abolition of government licensing of printed matter. John Locke later in the eighteenth century added to the groundswell with his theory of individual liberty. The French

philosophers of the eighteenth century integrated and popularized the libertarian principles, which later found expression in the Declaration of Independence and the American constitutional provisions for freedom of speech, press, and religion.

The function of the press, under the libertarian or rationalistic theory, is to participate in the search for truth by presenting all manner of evidence uncontrolled by outside authority. Man was regarded as essentially a rational being with the ability to determine the truth when presented with conflicting evidence and a choice of alternatives. The press was no longer considered an instrument for effecting government policy but an avenue for conveying information and argument by which those policies might be tested and evaluated by the mass of the people. To do this it must be free from governmental control. Milton, Erskine, and Jefferson all believed in the efficacy of the "self-righting" process as the only safe avenue in the continuing search for truth.

The rationalistic interpretation of the social purposes of mass media was imbedded in the structure of the society of which they are a part. Political democracy, religious toleration, economic freedom were all intertwined with the new concept of the function of the press. It was to be a "fourth estate," providing that check on government which no government itself can provide. As the base of political power was widened by the extension of political democracy, the duties of the press as a source of information for the electorate and as a watchdog over government operations increased.

A further refinement of our modern democratic theory of the function of the press was added by John Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century. He recognized that in a political democracy the majority can be just as tyrannical over a minority as a Tudor monarch. He elaborated the principle that the smallest minority should have as great freedom of expression as the most powerful majority. In addition, he gave emphasis to the dignity and intellectual inviolability of the individual.

These were the principles which found expression in our federal and state constitutions where the functions of mass media were enshrined. Social utility of the press was not to be defined in terms of supporting majority policies as in the authoritarian philosophy but in terms of informing the public about those activities of gov-

ernment which affect the public welfare, even to the point of viciously exposing any questionable governmental policies.

For almost two hundred years, the authoritarian and the libertarian theories operated side by side in different parts of the world. England and the United States were the outstanding exponents of the system of a press free from government interference. Other countries paid lip service to the ideal, but very few were able to maintain the system in practice over any extended period of time.

COMMUNIST THEORY

In the twentieth century, a third system, based on the philosophy of Karl Marx, made its appearance. Under the Marxist philosophy, the functions of mass media in a communist society were to be determined by the political and economic philosophy of that society. The purpose of the communist revolution in Russia was the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. *The function of mass media was to contribute to the success of that revolution and later to maintain and extend the socialist system.* As stated in the Stalin constitution of 1925, the purpose of the press is "to strengthen the socialist social order." All instruments of communication are, of course, socialized and under direct control of the existing hierarchy of power in the state.

The function of the press is not to aid in the search for truth, since the truth has already been determined by communist ideology. No tampering with the fundamental Marxist system is tolerated. However, self-criticism and castigations for failure to achieve established goals are not only permitted but actively encouraged.

As powerful instruments for the accomplishment of social policy, the mass media are carefully and expertly managed by loyal and orthodox party members. Under soviet theory, the stakes are too high and the masses too fickle to trust the future of state policies to such bourgeois concepts as "search for truth," "rational man," and "minority rights."

Even the Tudor and Stuart monarchs of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England did not maintain such tight control over mass media as the modern communists. In Elizabethan England the control system was a partnership, with the press in private hands conditioned upon royal approval. Under soviet theory, no part-

nership agreement is necessary; the state owns, directs, and operates the mass media as instruments for accomplishing social policies.

According to Lenin, the soviet system rested on a balance of coercion and persuasion, and this formula, says Alex Inkeles, is the master key to the understanding of Soviet society. Persuasion, to the Communist, means "organized, systematic concerted campaigns to change the attitudes and influence the actions of large social groups." [1] The various media of mass communication, the press, the radio, and motion pictures, are instruments to be utilized for the successful completion of these campaigns.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THEORY

A fourth concept of the function of the mass media has made its appearance in mid-century America. It is drawn largely from the work of Professor Hocking,[2] supplemented by other publications issued by the Commission on Freedom of the Press under the chairmanship of Robert M. Hutchins.

By the end of the first quarter of the present century, a number of criticisms of the functioning of mass media were being voiced. These media were now enlarged by the appearance of the motion picture and radio broadcasting. The newspaper had changed in character over a century from a political organ into a mass-circulation emporium of information and entertainment. The radio was entering more homes than any mass media had heretofore penetrated. There had taken place, according to the Hutchins commission, a "communications revolution."

It was seriously questioned whether the principles of Milton, of Erskine, of Jefferson, and of Mill, "the search for truth," the "conflict of the market place of information and ideas" and the "self-righting process" were operative in the complex social pattern of modern America.

This communications revolution has been described in the following words:

[1] Alex Inkeles, *Public Opinion in Soviet Russia: A Study in Mass Persuasion*, p. 3. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950.

[2] William E. Hocking, *Freedom of the Press: A Framework of Principle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947.

Literacy, the electorate, and the population have increased to such a point that the political community to be served by the press includes all but a tiny fraction of the millions of the American people. The press has been transformed into an enormous and complicated piece of machinery. As a necessary accompaniment, it has become big business. There is a marked reduction in the number of units of the press relative to the total population. Although in small communities we can still see a newspaper plant and product that resemble their Colonial prototypes, these are no longer the most characteristic of the most influential agencies of communication.

The right of free public expression has therefore lost its earlier reality. Protection against government is not now enough to guarantee that a man who has something to say shall have a chance to say it. The owners and managers of the press determine which persons, which facts, which versions of the facts, and which ideas shall reach the public.[8]

Professor Hocking makes a further distinction. He is willing to grant the efficacy of the libertarian principles in the realm of individual speech, but he questions that the same principles can long continue to apply to the managers of the mass media. *The importance and prevalence of the mass media in our society impose on them an obligation of social responsibility.* As long as such an obligation is recognized by these institutions and made the basis for operational policies, the liberterian system will continue to fulfil the needs of society. But on the other hand, according to the Hutchins commission, if the media themselves do not assume such an obligation, then it may be necessary for some other agency to undertake to see that the essential functions of mass communication are performed.

The theory of social responsibility was not originated by the Hutchins commission. For many years, enlightened managers of mass media have insisted that the instruments of communication must perform a public service to justify their acceptance by the public. With the reduction in direct competition, many operators have recognized the obligation to provide the public with accurate and authoritative information and comment. Like much of big business, the mass media have recognized their dependence on the wishes and needs of the audience and have contrived many ingenious tools for determining those wishes and needs.

[8] Commission on Freedom of the Press, *A Free and Responsible Press*, pp. 13-14. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947.

Operation of the Libertarian Theory

The purposes and functions of the press under the libertarian doctrine were hotly debated throughout the eighteenth century. Such stalwart conservatives as Dr. Samuel Johnson doubted that a theory of press liberty could ever work successfully in a stabilized society. The great English judges of that century recognized that freedom in any society is not absolute but must be regulated against its own excesses. Sir William Blackstone set the pattern by formalizing the judicial concept of freedom of expression to mean freedom from licensing but subjection to restrictions *after publication,* as set down by the courts and legislatures. Lord Mansfield, one of the great English jurists, contended until the end of his days that publications which injured the reputation of the government could be punished and that judges rather than juries were more competent to determine when that injury took place.

In the United States the libertarian concept was more readily accepted as a basis for operation of the mass media. The early colonists had resented the control of newspapers by representatives of the English government. The spirit of liberty found a congenial breeding ground among the individualists who had emigrated to the new country. The adherence of a large part of the press to the revolutionary cause and its contribution to the success of the revolt justified the political philosophers' faith in the right-mindedness of both the publishers and the populace. During the stamp-tax controversy of 1765 the colony of New Jersey recognized the contribution of the press by including its freedom from governmental supervision as one of its resolves (November 30, 1765). The principle of press freedom was first stated in terms of civil rights in the Virginia Bill of Rights in June, 1776, and subsequently appeared in bills adopted by eleven colonies prior to the drafting of the federal constitution.

The first amendment to the federal constitution, accepted in 1791, recognized the libertarian doctrine of the function of the press in a democracy. The press, which was then the only important medium of mass communication, was given a preferred status vis-a-vis the government and its officials. Alexander Hamilton had argued that such a protection was unnecessary since the federal government possessed only such powers as were specifically delegated to it by

the states, and since no such power to regulate the press was expressly granted, no positive protection was needed. Madison and others argued that a constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression was necessary to curtail any implied powers which the federal government might be inclined to assert.

The first test of the libertarian doctrine under the new constitution occurred within a few years when the Alien and Sedition Act of 1798 was adopted for the protection of the Federalist party against internal and external attacks. Editors of influential democratic newspapers were jailed under the statute for vituperative attacks on President John Adams. The law expired with the death of the Federalist administration, and Jefferson pardoned and refunded fines to those individuals who had been prosecuted for seditious publications.

Thomas Jefferson was one of the most aggressive of the exponents of libertarian principles as related to the mass media. In his early years he was convinced that a government which could not stand up under published criticism did not deserve to survive. In his later years as president he was subjected to a barrage of abuse from opposition newspapers, and although he recoiled under what he considered unjustified criticisms, he never completely lost faith in the "self-righting" process and the ultimate rationality of the masses of the people.

The principle of a free press was subjected to severe stresses during the growth of antislavery sentiment after the 1830's when both southern and northern states sought to suppress discussion of this controversial issue. During the Civil War, Lincoln found it necessary for a time to suppress civil rights in several northern communities where pro-Southern agitation was threatening to interfere with the war effort. Aside from these aberrations, the American system of uncontrolled public discussion of controversial public issues expanded throughout the nineteenth century.

Not until the first world war was this country faced with the serious problem of determining the bounds of freedom of expression. The problem of determining those bounds is one which has never been satisfactorily solved. Milton avoided the general issue but indicated that the freedom to propagandize for "Popery, and open superstition" could lawfully be curtailed. The English jurists, Mans-

field and Blackstone, argued that Parliament, the center of power under the British Constitution, could establish such restraints as it saw fit. In America, Jefferson maintained his faith in freedom of expression up to the point of open rebellion.

The problem of setting definite bounds to the libertarian doctrine was faced by the Supreme Court of the United States under the controls imposed by Congress during World War I. Congress evidently felt that it had powers to place restraints on the mass media, particularly in a state of war. It had long been recognized that words can be the springs to action and that where a direct connection can be established between the impetus of the expression and the evil or damage which organized society seeks to avoid, the state is justified in imposing penalties.

The Supreme Court began with the theory that if there was a *reasonable tendency* for the words to induce the illegal or disloyal action, the publication of such words could be penalized. Justices Holmes and Brandeis argued that such a reasonable tendency did not present a sufficiently direct association with future or possible acts to warrant punishment. They devised a formula of *clear and present danger* as expressed in the following: "The question in every case is whether the words are used in circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent."

Between the two world wars this doctrine received the support of the majority of the Supreme Court. In a series of important decisions, the judges gave preferred status to the guarantees of freedom of expression provided by the Fourteenth Amendment and extended their supervision over legislative enactments by the individual states.

Since World War II this country has faced the novel situation of a "cold" war with Communism. The problem posed was to what extent should we permit communist agitation for the violent overthrow of our democratic form of government. At what point should controls be placed on this type of advocacy? Obviously to wait until such revolution actually materialized might be too late. Just as obvious was the libertarian tradition permitting free and open discussion of all public issues without undue concern for the

effects of such discussion on the health of society, trusting instead to the ultimate soundness of decisions arrived at through the open and competitive market place of thought and ideas.

Recent decisions of the Supreme Court indicate that, in the present situation of active ideological warfare, the gravity of the threat to existing institutions justifies restraints on advocacy at a point somewhat more removed in probability from actual accomplishment than that indicated by the "clear-and-present-danger" test.

The Service Functions of the Mass Media

For purposes of brief analysis, the service functions of the media of mass communication can be classified under three headings, (*a*) informational, (*b*) entertainment, and (*c*) sales or advertising messages.

THE INFORMATION FUNCTION

All of the previously described philosophies of the place of mass media in society emphasize the information function. Through the control and distribution of information, the Communist countries are able to maintain and strengthen the socialist state. Under the libertarian doctrine, the mass media are charged with the obligation of providing an informational basis for political and social decisions. The theory assumes a mass basis for fundamental political decisions such as occur in highly developed democracies. It also assumes a literate electorate capable of digesting and assessing the information and comment on public matters which the mass media provide. And, finally, it assumes an interested and socially conscious public, aware of its part in the on-going democratic process. The function of mass education in the development of this literate and discriminating electorate is discussed in the last section of this chapter.

To accomplish the informational objectives as set out above, the mass media in the United States developed a unique contribution to journalism, *the theory of objectivity*. The early nineteenth-century newspaper was primarily a political organ attached more or less directly to a political group or figure. It was in large part a party press. News and comment were selected on the basis of contributing to the success of the party or its candidates. One could

expect to find only favorable Republican news in a Republican newspaper and favorable Whig news in a Whig newspaper.

Soon after the 1830's, the New York newspapers discovered the salability of fresh information unconnected with political issues. The trend toward objective nonpolitical reporting was expanded with the development of the news-exchange systems which resulted in the organization of the Associated Press. Members of the news-exchange systems represented various political affiliations, and it became necessary to concentrate on objective information rather than politically slanted comments in order to satisfy the needs of all the members of the exchange.

The significance of the American contribution of objective information is apparent when American news media are compared with those of countries which still maintain a political press. On most of the European continent the press has continued to be a party press with each medium attached to and supporting a particular political group. For a reader to get any kind of over-all view of a political situation, it is necessary for him to read with discrimination all the media representing the various political parties. In most communities of the United States, it is possible for the reader of a single newspaper to get a fairly accurate picture of current political controversies.

The theory of objectivity has led to the American tradition of the distinction between news and editorials. Many newspapers and periodicals retain the older tradition of political support on the editorial page but attempt to establish an objective impartiality in the news columns. The distinction is sometimes difficult to maintain in practice, and its successful accomplishment varies with the tradition and abilities of the managers and writers.

In recent years the theory of objectivity has been widely criticized. It has been pointed out by such astute observers as Elmer Davis and Erwin Canham that a slavish devotion to objective and unexplained accounts of current events fails to give the reader the full truth. News or information is not an isolated event but must be interpreted as to its essential meaning in the social context. A dead-pan account of an event unrelated to the background against which it is projected can be just as misleading as an inaccurate or garbled description.

A theory of interpretive reporting has been developed to avoid this result. Under this concept, the essential facts must be accurate, but at the same time these facts must be interpreted to the reader who in many cases lacks background or initiative to make the interpretation for himself. To cite an example, a charge of malfeasance in office is made on the floor of the United States Senate against a prominent administrative officer. The mass media duly report this event, including the charge. Under the interpretive theory of the function of the press, it is also the duty of the media to include in the account some background material such as the fact that this same official has been accused of the same charge on previous occasions by the same Senator, or that he has been called to account on previous occasions by other senators, or has previously cleared himself against similar charges. It is also the duty of the media in such an instance to attempt to include, along with the charge, a statement from the accused person in answer to the charge. A good interpretive reporter would set the incident against the general political background so that its implications would be generally apparent to the reader or listener.

A serious danger in the use of interpretive presentation in inexpert hands threatens the entire concept of objectivity. Unless the observers, writers, and editors are exceedingly adept and conscientious, it is possible to misinterpret the facts, to slant the presentation, and to miss the essential meaning of the news event. In capable and experienced hands, the method of interpretation is an advance over the older theory of objectivity, but the danger lies in its use by careless or dishonest interpreters.

THE ENTERTAINMENT FUNCTION

An analysis of the content of all the media of mass communication would probably reveal that current information is only a small part of the total offering. A large part of the materials reaching the American public through newspapers, magazines, books, motion pictures, radio, and television can be classed as entertainment. The sales function of the mass media as represented by advertising will be discussed later.

The proportion of entertainment varies greatly among communications media. Newspapers, periodicals, and books represent one

category with about an equal division between entertainment and informational content. Motion pictures, radio, and television make up a second category where primary emphasis is on entertainment with a lower proportion of informational material than is usually found in the older media.

No very clear theory as to the entertainment function has ever been developed. The purpose of such content is to amuse, to entertain, and to satisfy and develop the esthetic tastes of the consuming public. From the earliest period of modern times the entertainment media have been subject, in theory if not in practice, to strict government control. For long periods of time the theater was suspected of being a sink of iniquity capable of corrupting the morals and tastes of its devotees. In Tudor times the stage was occasionally employed as a vehicle for political comment in the absence of other avenues reaching the public, but this function gradually diminished as political and religious controversies found other outlets.

The entertainment function of mass media was not accorded the same preferential status in a democratic society as was assigned to the information function. Entertainment was not considered an essential element in the operation of political institutions. The result was that for many years the arts were not recognized as deserving of protection from governmental or institutional controls. The stage has been subject to licensing, the movies to censorship, and radio and television to threats of supervision. Only recently has the Supreme Court of the United States recognized the application of the guarantees of freedom of speech and press to the entertainment function of the mass media.

An ominous development in the field of entertainment has paralleled this belated recognition of liberty of expression in the arts. The Russian Soviet system quickly recognized the ideological values in mass entertainment and subjected the entire field to state control. Even such abstract arts as painting, sculpture, and music could contribute to the maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat and, therefore, should become instruments of social policy. Hitler recognized the political value of the arts and their possible subversive effects on the masses and issued edicts for their control.

In the United States the function of entertainment and the arts has been scrutinized for antidemocratic and un-American implica-

tions. Hollywood writers and producers and radio craftsmen have been investigated for possible contributions to the subversive effects of the entertainment arts. It is obvious that an imaginative production in the theater, on the radio, and especially on television can have tremendous effects on its audience. Drama can carry a more powerful ideological impact than a purely informational discussion. The problem is complex and relatively new to American thinking.

To what extent should the entertainment function contribute to the goals of contemporary society? To what extent should it be allowed to deviate from or even to undermine those goals? One principle is clear. The source of an artistic production should not be allowed to predetermine its acceptability. A sonata by a communist, a painting by a fascist should not be condemned merely because its source or creator is contaminated. The content of the entertainment itself should be the only criterion for judging its effects.

THE SALES FUNCTION

Like the function of entertainment, that of sales or advertising is not equally distributed among the mass media. Newspapers and magazines devote approximately half or more of their space to advertising messages and derive about the same proportion of their income from this sale of space. Radio and television are almost entirely dependent economically on advertising, while income from this source is negligible in books, motion pictures, and the theater.

In general, it might be said that advertising pays for from one-third to one-half the cost of operation of all the mass media. Without its financial support, the cost to the consumer would be substantially increased, and, consequently, the size of the consuming public would be decreased.

Our mass media today are products of our industrial civilization, and without a high level of business and industrial prosperity they would be unable to perform their functions with the same independence or at the same cost to the consumer. Where the economic system has not been developed to the point of offering advertising support for the mass media, it has been necessary to rely on less acceptable sources of income. Before the advent of advertising, newspapers and periodicals were largely dependent upon direct or

indirect support from a political or other special-interest group.

It has been popular to attribute any distortion or inadequacies in the performance of the functions of the press and radio to the pernicious influence of advertising content and advertising revenue. On the contrary, the distribution of sources of income among a wide variety of advertisers has permitted the press to maintain an independence not to be found under any other system of support. It should be pointed out that the Hutchins commission did not place the blame upon the advertiser for failure of the mass media to fulfil their functions in society. The movies, supported without advertising, are chastised along with newspapers and magazines. Radio came in for a special spanking because of the nature of its advertising arrangements. The commission recommended that the latter industry "take control of its programs and that it treat advertising as it is treated by the best newspapers."

The sales messages carried by the mass media perform an essential function in our economy. When truthfully and accurately stated, advertising performs two functions: (*a*) it informs the consumer about both old and new products, and (*b*) it pumps vitality into the economy by moving goods from the manufacturer to the retailer to the consumer. Without both functions our highly integrated business and industrial system would wither and decline.

Not all advertising takes into consideration the social needs of the consumer. Frequently it is primarily sales talk designed to sell goods in a highly competitive market. It is well known that a high degree of competition tends to lead to excesses in emotional appeals. Every attempt should be made to curtail these excesses both by managers of the media and by the advertisers themselves. In the long run, the most effective advertising is that which gains consumer acceptance. Consumers who are insulted, emotionally aroused, or cheated will eventually retaliate through a shift in buying habits.

In recent years a wide use has been made of advertising messages to sell, not goods, but ideas. The purpose of such advertising is to convince the audience of the mass media of the soundness or unsoundness of a social, political, or economic belief, sometimes but not always in a controversial context. Advertising has been employed to sell safety, to improve the health of the nation, to attack communism, to gain support for the enactment or repeal of legisla-

tion affecting business enterprises. There is no sound reason why advertising should not perform this function when used with restraint and a consideration for truth and accuracy. The danger lies in the availability of the media to those interests with the largest pocketbook. If the use of advertising to sell ideas continues to expand, the mass media must devise techniques for equalizing the argument and information on controversial issues.

Education and the Mass Media

Implicit in all the functions of the media of mass communication is the obligation to contribute to the education of the members of the community, whether such community be the cross-roads village, the metropolitan center, the state, or the nation. Unless these powerful instruments contribute to the social cohesion of the community, they are not fulfilling their obligations to a democratic society.

Education is a continuing process, and those institutions most concerned with its development, such as schools, church, home, and mass media, must co-operate to develop a successful and satisfying pattern of living. The more formal instruments of education, the schools, can assist by laying a basis for proper and intelligent use of the mass media and by developing a discriminating and understanding judgment of the products of the mass media, whether they be motion pictures, radio programs, or political editorials. The schools should be aware of the problems as well as the functions of the mass media so that these can be intelligently studied and solutions provided.

The media through their daily and almost hourly impact on the individual are a powerful educational tool. The managers of the press, the radio, and the motion pictures should be alert to higher standards of performance as soon as, if not before, the consuming public accepts such standards. The mass media must recognize in their daily operations an overriding obligation to contribute to the accomplishment of those objectives which our democratic society has set for itself.

CHAPTER III

The Social Functions of the Press

THEODORE PETERSON

Theoretical Basis of Press Freedom

As the libertarian philosophy of freedom developed in England and America, the press became accountable for performing at least six social functions. In brief, its six assigned jobs are these: (*a*) enlightening the public, (*b*) servicing the political system, (*c*) safeguarding personal liberties, (*d*) making a profit, (*e*) servicing the economic system, and (*f*) providing entertainment. It is easy to see that some of these functions arose naturally from our ideas of freedom of speech. A brief review of our traditional theory of press freedom will show also that certain characteristics of the press system make it difficult for the press to perform some of these functions adequately.

The traditional Anglo-American theory of freedom of the press rests on a belief that man has certain inalienable natural rights, one of which is the right to free expression. It assumes that man is disposed to seek truth and will be guided by it. Using his reason, man can find truth if he has free access to ideas and information. For the theory also puts strong faith in what has been called the "self-righting process," the unfettered clash of ideas and information in the free and open market, which ultimately results in the emergence of truth. As men find truth in the free play of ideas, social change results from conversion instead of from revolution. The theory makes virtually all ideas welcome. If they are true, men will embrace them; if they are false, men will reject them. More probably, however, men will find some truth amidst falsehood, some falsehood amidst truth, because truth and falsehood rarely appear in simple shades of black and white.

Prepublication censorship, under the theory, is abhorrent. In the long run, suppression is ineffectual, for sooner or later a suppressed idea will make itself known. Meanwhile, however, suppression may lend a fictitious validity to invalid ideas. Furthermore, the theory recognizes that no person or group of persons is wise enough to distinguish between valid and invalid ideas before they have been put to the test of the market. Even traffickers in lies and distortions must be free to have their say. There is no need to fear them; other men will find it profitable to expose them so that in the long run lies and distortion will be shown up for what they are.

As fighters against tyranny traditionally regarded the government as the chief foe of liberty, the Anglo-American concept of press freedom came to be predominantly one of negative liberty. Primarily, it emphasizes freedom *from* government intervention. But the theory does not regard press freedom as absolute. The theory sanctions certain minimal restraints. For example, it sanctions postpublication libel laws (although, as mentioned, it looks with strong disfavor on prepublication restrictions) and laws regulating obscenity. More recently the "clear and present danger" doctrine, first expressed by Justice Holmes in 1919, has been generally sanctioned. This doctrine holds that free speech may be abridged when the words in question are used "in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent." Wartime limitations on press freedom, too, have been justified. The protection of the Constitution has been held to be less in wartime than in peacetime because "the character of every act depends upon the circumstances in which it is done."

So, somewhat simplified, runs the traditional Anglo-American theory of freedom of the press. It is a theory evolved by scores of philosophers, statesmen, jurists, and practitioners. If only a few names are usually associated with it—those of John Milton, Thomas Jefferson, and John Stuart Mill, for example—it is because those men best caught the spirit of their times or overshadowed other men who expressed the same ideas. As this theory of press freedom developed, the press came to be held responsible for performing certain social functions.[1]

[1] See bibliographical note at end of this chapter.

Social Responsibilities of the Press

ENLIGHTENING THE PUBLIC

Man can explore at firsthand but a tiny fraction of the world of which he is a part. To know and understand the world, man must depend largely on the printed word. Not only can the press furnish man with the information he needs to formulate his own ideas but it can also stimulate him by offering him the ideas of others. For centuries, the press has been regarded as an important carrier of information and ideas. Running through John Milton's *Areopagitica* of 1644 is the theme that a free press is indispensable in the quest for truth. As Milton put it, "Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making." Although Thomas Jefferson wrote no unified work on the press, his scattered writings time and again touch upon the importance of a free press to public enlightenment. In a letter to M. Coray in 1823, he remarked: "The press is the best instrument for enlightening the mind of man, and improving him as a rational, moral, and social being."

By implication, John Stuart Mill, too, recognized the role of the press in enlightening the public; for much of his essay, *On Liberty*, dwelt on the necessity of free discussion for the individual's self-development and the mental well-being of mankind. Nor were these moulders of traditional theory the only ones to assign the press a public enlightenment function. More recent writers, including some who would modify existing theory—as, for example, the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press—have made much of the importance of the press in informing and educating the citizenry.

SERVICING THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Closely allied with the public enlightenment function of the press is the second function of servicing the political system. The very nature of democratic government imposes a heavy responsibility on the press, which is granted a privileged position under the Constitution. As Carl Becker once remarked, "Democratic government

rests on the assumption that the people are capable of governing themselves better than any one or a few can do it for them." If the citizens are to rule themselves wisely, they must be aware of the issues and problems at stake and must have access to views and information on which to base sound decisions. Therefore, the press must serve as an engine of democracy, as a transmission belt between the people and their elected representatives. The very success of government may depend in large measure on the extent to which the press services the political system and the extent to which the people make wise use of the press.

SAFEGUARDING PERSONAL LIBERTIES

Not far removed from the two foregoing functions of the press is the third—safeguarding personal liberties. Individual liberty is the core of democracy, which is founded on the assumption that the individual citizen knows what is best for himself. John Stuart Mill expressed the happy idea that only the free individual can develop his capabilities to the fullest; as the individual develops, Mill believed, society as a whole benefits. Although infringements on an individual's freedom may come from many sources, the government has long been a potential enemy of liberty. As the theory of press freedom evolved, the press came to be assigned the task of watchdog, to sound the alarm whenever personal liberties are infringed.

Jefferson reiterated the importance of the press in safeguarding democracy by exposing infringements on personal liberties. "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be," he wrote in 1816. "The functionaries of every government have propensities to command at will the liberty and property of their constituents. . . . Where the press is free, and every man able to read, all is safe." And earlier, in 1792, he wrote to George Washington: "No government ought to be without censors; and where the press is free, no one ever will be. If virtuous, it need not fear the fair operation of attack and defense." Not only must the press preserve its own freedom of expression but it must also be alert to all infringements on freedom, wherever they occur.

MAKING A PROFIT

The traditional concept of press freedom lends cogent justification to a fourth function of the press—making a profit through proper use of its freedom. The theory holds that only a free press, operating under a system of private enterprise, can fulfil the tasks of enlightening the public, servicing the political system, and safeguarding personal liberties. The syllogism behind that assumption runs somewhat as follows: Only a free press can serve the cause of truth. A press beholden to the government or to any special interest group cannot be free, because it will inevitably be subjected to environmental and financial pressures. Therefore, to be free to present news and views without fear or favor, the press must be a self-sufficient business enterprise. Carried a step further, this line of reasoning has been used to justify large communications enterprises. The argument is that a large, prosperous medium is better able to withstand pressures than a small, marginal one.

The entry of the government into the communications field, according to traditional theory, is per se bad. For one thing, governmental media would no doubt be more interested in perpetuating the party in power than in truth. For another thing, a subsidized governmental press would threaten the economic sufficiency of a private enterprise press. With no need to show a profit, such a press would have an unfair economic advantage over the regular commercial press.

In a sense, this correlation of press independence with profit-making has a strong kinship to Adam Smith's idea in classical economics that as each individual works for his own gain, he serves the welfare of the community. The necessity of showing a profit, the theory runs, assures us of a press closely attuned to the needs and wants of the community. George Sokolsky, columnist for the King Features Syndicate, expressed this view in the Don R. Mellett Lecture at Syracuse University in May, 1947.

The battle for circulation, Sokolsky said, is the battle for truth. Although a few publishers may find it profitable to pander to the lowest taste and to deal in falsehoods, a far greater number of publishers will find it even more profitable to deal in truth and good taste. As readers vote with their coins and subscriptions, the publications they do not want will wither and die from lack of

financial support. The publications they do want will grow financially strong and flourish. By serving his own personal interest in making a profit, then, the publisher almost automatically gives the community the sort of newspaper it wants and needs. The system is the essence of democracy, according to some spokesmen for the theory; for, by expressing its pleasure or displeasure with coins as ballots, the public gets the sort of newspapers, magazines, and books it wants.

Critics of the press have taken sharp issue with this aspect of press theory. By a sort of Gresham's Law of Journalism, they say, bad publications tend to drive out the good. They summon a number of examples in evidence. Boston, for example, has long been known for the low quality of its newspapers; and the best paper in the city, the *Christian Science Monitor*, is not even a home-town paper but a national one. They call the roll of the fallen giants of New York—the *World*, for example, and the *Sun*—and they point out that the huge circulation of the *News* is more than quadruple that of the *Times*.

A press system devoted to the irresponsible pursuit of profit, critics say, results not in publications serving the wants and needs of the community but in publications ill-equipped to meet the demands of complex contemporary society. It results in publications aimed at the lowest level of public taste. It results in publications for which the sensational is more important than the significant. Moreover, the critics say, the public, unacquainted with the possibilities of the media and conditioned to like what it gets, often cannot tell what it would really like and what it does need.

SERVICING THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Related to the profit-making function is a fifth task of the press, one which emerged with the development of modern advertising, that of servicing the economic system. Long before advertising assumed the importance it has today, the press fulfilled this task to some extent. In Colonial America, newspapers filled their columns with information about commerce and shipping, material important to an economy in which foreign trade and shipping bulked large. And newspapers devoted to commerce continued to flourish, even after the penny press of the 1830's made its pitch for

the masses with human-interest copy.

But it was with the rise of a complex system of mass production and mass distribution that the contribution of the press to the national economy became of major importance. Today a task of the press is to bring together, through advertising, the buyers and sellers of goods and services. In performing that seemingly simple task, the press, according to some scholars, has helped to promote a dynamic, expanding economy. Such is Borden's general conclusion in *The Economic Effects of Advertising*.[2] Sandage has credited advertising with contributing to a high level of consumption, with helping to allocate resources, with stimulating product variety, and with helping to bring about prices favorable to the consumer.[3] Although critics have charged advertising with fostering wastefulness, monopoly, and other evils, the press as an advertising medium certainly has contributed to a high material standard of living.

By editorial fare as well as by advertising, the press oils the wheels of commerce. For instance, approximately two thousand trade, technical, and business publications in the United States are important to manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, and others engaged in commerce. They keep their specialized readers abreast of new developments in the fields they cover, and they carry news on which many of the decisions of business are based.

PROVIDING ENTERTAINMENT

Almost from the time that Caxton introduced printing to England, the press has devoted a part of its output to entertainment. However moralizing may have been their tone, the broadside ballads which flourished in Britain for more than three centuries were intended less for edification than for amusement. Other offerings—pamphlets and books—were also intended to amuse the reader. Early newspapers in England and America were primarily informational, but they, too, ran human-interest copy from time to time. As the press tapped mass audiences, there seems to have been an

[2] Neil H. Borden, *The Economic Effects of Advertising*. Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1942.

[3] C. H. Sandage, "The Role of Advertising in Modern Society," *Journalism Quarterly*, XXVIII (Winter, 1951), 31-38.

increase in the proportion of material frankly designed to afford amusement, entertainment, or escape. Today, serving up entertainment seems to be one of the main functions of the press.

Evaluating the Services of the Press

Those, then, are the six functions ascribed to the press. Historically, some of them are of longer standing than others. Public enlightenment is one of the oldest functions; servicing the economic system is a relatively recent addition. As has been shown, some of the functions are inherent in the theory of political freedom. The responsibilities of the press for enlightening the public, for servicing the political system, and for safeguarding personal liberties are intimately identified with the Anglo-American concept of freedom of the press. At least one of the functions, however, is not inherent in the theory. The role of the press in servicing the economic system was recognized only after the development of modern advertising.

In practice, of course, some of the functions may conflict. Entertainment, for example, may clash with public enlightenment. A magazine publisher may wish to explore seriously the nature of the struggle between East and West; most readers may want slick fiction and features that do not strain their intellect. The book publisher may wish to publish a philosophical work; the book-buying public may prefer to spend its dollars on historical novels with bosomy heroines. So, at bottom, the function most likely to collide with others is making a profit. The magazine publisher runs fiction because it is more profitable than articles analyzing the struggle between East and West. The book publisher brings out historical novels because bosomy heroines are more profitable than philosophical discussions.

One must remember that a given medium need not carry out all six functions by itself. Newspapers, as a medium, need not perform all six tasks. It is enough if newspapers, in conjunction with the other media, do the job. Nor does every publication have to carry out all of the functions all the time. A given publication may do only two or three of the tasks and still be making a genuine public contribution. The six functions are those of the press as a whole, working in concert.

What should be the proper balance among the six functions in

the press as a whole? The answer involves subject judgments which will depend on the importance one attaches to each of the six tasks and what he expects from a press system in a democratic society. Nonetheless, certain characteristics of the United States press system make it difficult for the press to strike what some persons regard as a proper balance among the six functions. The press has performed some of these functions admirably. It has done a good job of profit-making, and by doing so it has remained free from its traditionally feared foe, government. It has done a good job of servicing the economic system. Despite the faults one can find with advertising, there can be no doubt that the press has contributed to a high material standard of living by bringing together the buyers and sellers of goods and services. It has done a good job of providing entertainment, however much the critics may quarrel with the cultural level of that entertainment. If anything, the press has performed the entertainment function so well that it has neglected some of its other tasks.

There are other functions which, some critics believe, the press has not performed as adequately. In its task of enlightening the public, they say, the press has fallen far short of the requirements of contemporary society. Aiming at the lowest common denominator of its mass audience, the press gives superficial treatment to significant issues and events; too often, its emphasis is on the *what* rather than on the *why*.

Contributing to this evil, they add, is the insistence of the press on a curious sort of objectivity—a spurious objectivity which results in half-truths, incompleteness, incomprehensibility. In adhering to objective reporting, newspapers try to present both sides of a story; but in doing so, say the critics, they do not bother to evaluate for the reader the trustworthiness of conflicting sources, nor do they supply the perspective essential to a complete understanding of the situation. Instead of assuming that two half-truths make a truth, the critics say, the press should put facts into a context that gives them meaning.

Moreover, the critics continue, the press does not give adequate attention to minority views; and even when it does give space to minorities, it invariably emphasizes the humorous, the ludicrous, the insignificant aspects of the minority viewpoint. Nor is that all.

Because of design or because of the way the system works, the press often biases and distorts informative material.

The foregoing summary by no means completes the inventory of charges against the press as public enlightener, but it does indicate the general nature of contemporary criticism. In its job of servicing the political system, too, some critics think, the press has fallen down. Its shortcomings in this regard are essentially the same as those in its attempts to enlighten the public.

The press also has been remiss in safeguarding personal liberties, some critics say. To be sure, the press has championed its own freedom and has been quick to protect itself against potential threats to it. It has been less ready, however, to expose and denounce infringements on the liberty of others. Indeed, by some of its excesses, some critics think, the press has violated the rights of some citizens. It has invaded their privacy without just cause; it has destroyed their reputations by publishing malicious gossip and by headlining irresponsible charges made by politicians using Congressional immunity for their own self-aggrandizement.

The critics' charges have some validity. However, one should remember that their generalizations do not apply with equal force to all media or to all units in a given medium. Perhaps the criticisms hold most strongly for newspapers and the mass circulation magazines, least strongly for small circulation magazines and books. And within each medium, there are publications which carry out their functions superbly. The newspaper field is brightened by such conscientious and responsible organs as the *New York Times* and the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, to name but two. In their own ways, such magazines as *Harper's*, the *New Yorker*, and others have performed with exemplary integrity. Nearly every book publisher can name a number of books he has published without expectation of profit in order to give a deserving author a hearing.

Problems Involved in Publishing

What hinders the press in carrying out its functions? There are many things. There are limitations imposed by the communication process itself—by the way in which we send and receive spoken and written messages. There are limitations imposed by

the nature of the media. In this chapter, however, we will consider but two major problems—concentration of ownership of the media, and the commercial basis of the press system.

CONCENTRATION OF OWNERSHIP OF THE PRESS

The concentration of ownership of the press—which has resulted from, among other things, technological advances and the demands by readers for improved service—has alarmed many observers. In the daily newspaper field, the number of papers has gone steadily downward as circulations have steadily mounted. As the number of dailies has diminished, more and more cities have been left without competing newspapers. Nixon has thoroughly documented this situation.[4]

The number of English-language dailies of general circulation reached its peak—2,600—in 1909, according to Nixon. Since then, the number has gone steadily downward as a result of suspensions, mergers, and changes from daily to less frequent publication. Between the two world wars—between 1918 and 1944—the total number of all dailies declined 19.4 per cent. Yet, in the same period, the total circulation of daily newspapers increased 60.4 per cent. The following figures indicate the trend toward fewer general circulation English-language newspapers with increased circulations:

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF DAILY NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR CIRCULATION, 1930 TO 1951

Year	Total Dailies	Total Circulation
1930	1,942	39,589,172
1935	1,950	38,155,540
1940	1,878	41,131,611
1945	1,749	48,384,188
1950	1,772	53,829,072
1951	1,773	54,017,938

A glance at these figures shows that fewer papers are accounting for larger circulations. And as the number of dailies has declined, so has the number of cities with competing papers. Cities without

[4] Raymond B. Nixon, "Concentration and Absenteeism in Daily Newspaper Ownership," *Journalism Quarterly*, XXII (June, 1945), 97-114.

competing papers rose in number from 1,114 in 1930 to 1,277 in 1945. Of all United States cities with dailies in 1945, 91.6 per cent did not have competing papers. Wrote Nixon in 1945: "Daily newspaper competition, certainly in the full economic meaning of the word, has been eliminated from all but 117 American cities. Ten entire states have no local competition whatsoever."

The growth of newspaper chains, especially in view of the declining number of newspapers, has also caused observers some concern. The national chains had their greatest growth after the first world war. Today they have been largely supplanted by state and regional chains. Nevertheless, the number of dailies affiliated with chains has been on the increase, as the following figures testify.

TABLE 2

CONTROL OF DAILY NEWSPAPERS BY NEWSPAPER CHAINS, 1929 TO 1949

Year	Number of Chains	Number of Chain Dailies	Per Cent of Total Number of Dailies	Average Number of Dailies per Chain
1929	52	267	13.7	5.0
1935	63	328	16.8	5.1
1939	77	364	18.8	4.7
1945	76	370	21.2	4.8
1949	70	386	21.6	5.5

Cross-channel ownership has intensified the seriousness of concentration, some observers believe. And, indeed, a trend of the last twenty-odd years has been for chains linking radio stations and newspapers under the same ownership to replace chains consisting entirely of newspapers.

The magazine industry, too, is characterized by a few giants with mammoth circulations. Despite their dominance, however, the industry is still highly competitive. Although the voices of the mass-circulation leaders are loud and ubiquitous, they cannot entirely shout down the many small circulation magazines which, in the aggregate, offer a wide range of editorial fare. And despite the financial hazards endemic to magazine publishing, the field is still open to the small publisher who does not try to compete with the giants but seeks to publish for a relatively small circle of like-minded readers.

No published study has ever dealt with the amount of concentration in the magazine industry, which has oddly escaped the attention of scholars. Even much of the available data about the industry must be regarded warily for a number of reasons. For one thing, different persons use the term *magazine* in different ways. For another, there is no central clearinghouse for data, although there are agencies which collect certain types of information. The United States Census does collect some types of data, but they lack comparability and are often unreliable.

Yet one can get some idea of the amount of concentration in several ways. One way is to look at the relative size of magazine publishing establishments. The 2,166 periodical establishments in the United States in 1947 employed 68,823 persons, according to census reports. But just three establishments of the 2,166 employed about 17 per cent of the total—11,701 workers. And just ten of the 2,166 establishments employed nearly one-third of the total number of workers.

A second way of getting an idea of the amount of concentration is to look at circulation figures. To do so, though, one must necessarily use figures from various sources, figures often not strictly comparable. The 4,610 periodicals in the United States in 1947 had an aggregate per issue circulation of 384,628,482, according to census figures. Other sources show that 33 magazines, each with a circulation of a million or more, accounted for more than one-fifth of that aggregate circulation. At least 27 of those 33 magazines were published by companies having two or more publications.

Since magazines depend heavily on the post office for distribution, the use of the mails also gives some clues to the dominance of magazine leaders. Reporting on the use of postal services in 1949, a Senate committee said that 18 of the largest magazines and two of the largest newspapers accounted for 43.6 per cent of the weight and 43.2 per cent of the revenue in second class, the postal class which gives preferential rates to publishers of bona fide periodicals. Ten companies published these 20 publications; just three corporations controlled the nine largest.

Rare is the publisher who is content to publish just one magazine. Although it is scarcely feasible to determine the number of publishers who issue more than one magazine, the author, using two

standard listings of magazines, counted 68 multiple-title publishers of general-interest magazines and comic books, another 12 multiple-title publishers of farm magazines. The number of magazines issued by a single publisher ranged from two in several cases to 53 (32 of them comics) for Fawcett, 38 for Popular (virtually all pulps but no comics), and similarly hefty numbers for several others. Since the listings were incomplete—they did not cover business and trade journals, for example—those figures are conservative.

Still another way to get an idea of the extent of concentration is to learn how advertising funds are allocated. In 1950, the 2,257 national advertisers spent some $416,898,000 on advertising in general and farm magazines. Well over half of that national total was accounted for by the gross advertising revenues of just three publishers—Crowell-Collier, Curtis, and Time, Inc.—whose combined gross in 1950 was $231,380,947. And just two publications of Time, Inc.—*Time* and *Life*—grossed $104,159,377, roughly one-fourth of the national total.

Yet these figures should not distract attention from the fact that there are many small circulation magazines with variegated editorial policies. There are perhaps 6,500 magazines in the United States, even though the census shows considerably fewer than that. And although individual publishers and their magazines come and go, there seems to be no downward trend in either the number of publishers or the number of magazines. One reason for the relative stability of magazine numbers may be that publishers need not invest heavily in plant and equipment; they can have their printing done for them on contract. Nor are they limited by geography as are newspaper publishers and radio station operators; they can draw their audiences from the nation as a whole.

Today the odds in starting a new magazine seem to favor the established publishers, but many newcomers in recent years have become highly successful. In fact, a good share of the current circulation leaders has sprung up since the 1920's and 1930's—among them *Reader's Digest* (1922), *Better Homes and Gardens* (1922), *Time* (1923), *Life* (1936), *Look* (1936), *Coronet* (1936), *Woman's Day* (1937), and *Seventeen* (1944).

Although a handful of large publishers turns out a disproportionate share of books, the book industry is also composed of many

relatively small, highly-competitive firms, a situation desirable for the free flow of ideas. In some ways the book industry is akin to the magazine industry in that the publisher is limited neither by geography nor by large investments in plant and equipment. The lack of integration in the book industry favors the existence of a sizeable number of small, competitive firms, according to Robert W. Frase, economic consultant to the American Book Publishers' Council. Frase gave this picture of the industry:

> The United States book trade is in many ways an industry of the 19th century type, composed of relatively small, personally-managed, highly competitive firms, and with very little vertical integration. This situation is highly desirable so far as the end product is concerned—it maintains freedom of the press to a maximum degree. It insures publication of works which might not find a publisher if there were only a few giant integrated firms; and it is free of much of the pressure of serving a mass market with something which will offend or antagonize no one. On the other hand, this same lack of size and integration imposes economic handicaps, especially since the competition in the communications-of-ideas industry is generally more integrated and has, moreover, a major additional source of revenue in advertising.[5]

While it is true that the giants do not monopolize the book industry, it also seems true that a small number of houses is responsible for the bulk of the books published in the United States. Much of the information about the book industry, like that about the magazine industry, is sketchy and unreliable; but, however one reads the available figures, they do point to the importance of the large publisher. For instance, census reports for 1945 show that less than 3 per cent of the 1,080 publishers in the United States brought out more than 60 per cent of the total books sold, while 67 per cent of the publishers accounted for less than 1 per cent of the total. But the census figures inadvertently tend to exaggerate; they include many firms which cannot realistically be considered as publishers. Therefore, they are not as dependable as the data of William Miller, who estimates that the number of book publishing firms, year in and year out, averages about 250; of these, he says, some 42 account for the great bulk of the original book business.[6]

[5] Robert W. Frase, "The Book Trade," *Current Economic Comment*, XIV (May, 1952), 55.

[6] William Miller, *The Book Industry*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1949.

Many of the large trade-book publishers are affiliated with reprint houses. The "big three" hard-cover reprint houses are Garden City Publishing Company, Grosset & Dunlap, and World Publishing Co. World is the only one of the three not associated with a large trade-book firm, according to Miller. Garden City is a subsidiary of Doubleday, the largest hard-cover reprint house in the world; it issues Blue Ribbon Books, Star Books, Sun Dial Books, Permabooks, and other lines. Grosset & Dunlap was bought out in 1945 by the Book-of-the-Month Club and a group of publishing firms including Harper & Brothers, Little Brown & Company, Charles Scribner's Sons, and Random House. Some of the paper-back reprint firms are not associated with regular trade-book publishers, but the largest ones are. Simon and Schuster, for instance, has an interest in Pocket Books; Grosset & Dunlap and Curtis Publishing Company own shares in Bantam Books.

One of the largest trade-book publishers is also one of the largest operators of book clubs. Doubleday's book clubs include the Literary Guild, Junior Literary Guild, the Dollar Book Club, and the Book League of America.

Undeniably, then, the big publishers are important. They can most readily afford to bid for potential best-sellers and are most likely to attract the best-known authors. They are most likely to share in the economies of large press runs. And they are in the best position to advertise and promote their lists.

It is not only concentration within the book, magazine, and newspaper industries that has worried observers of the press system. Accompanying such concentration has been cross-channel ownership. Many newspaper publishers operate radio and TV stations, some publish magazines, and some do both. Some magazine publishers operate TV stations, own studios for producing documentary movies, and issue original or reprint books in paper-back editions. Some book publishers also issue magazines, and at least one operates a major book club and runs a string of retail bookstores.

Moreover, there are instances of strong vertical integration. Some newspapers own paper mills. And a few magazine publishers exhibit varying degrees of integration. Curtis Publishing Company, for example, owns forests and paper mills, has its own engraving and printing plants, operates a subsidiary which conducts market surveys

and statistical studies, owns agencies for soliciting subscriptions and for distributing magazines of its own and of other publishers.

Complicating this whole situation is the fact that the press is controlled by a single socioeconomic class—loosely, the "business class." Earl L. Vance wrote in the *Virginia Quarterly Review:*

> While there is nothing singular about newspapers being private business, there is cause for concern about business having a monopoly on a nation's sources of information. The reason is not that business is sinister. Monopoly of the press by any group—by labor or government no less than by business—is the one thing that freedom cannot endure.[7]

The problem of concentration has inspired a number of proposed remedies. Some writers base their remedies on the implicit conviction that bigness is necessarily badness. Ernst in his *The First Freedom* would improve press performance by what he calls "old-fashioned, approved techniques—right down the middle of our traditional legislative paths." His recommendations, in essence, include the breaking up of communications empires and the fostering of small communications enterprises.[8]

There is some support for Ernst's point of view in the argument of MacIver in *The Web of Government* that too much power in the hands of any group, that every monopoly or approach to monopoly, is inimical to democracy. While recognizing the merits of large communications enterprises if they are checked by public safeguards, MacIver warns: "Of all such monopolies, the most immediately fatal to democracy is the monopoly of the media of opinion, or any approximation to it."[9]

Other writers have assailed the thesis that bigness is necessarily badness. Economist Robert A. Brady contends that Ernst's recipe of competition is outmoded; that, for all practical purposes, it has been abandoned by business, government, economists, and others; that as therapy for the ills threatening democracy it is essentially worthless.

Brady fully recognizes the evils of concentration under which the few can determine policy for the many. He says in effect that

[7] Earl L. Vance, "Freedom of the Press for Whom?" *Virginia Quarterly Review*, XXI (Summer, 1945), 342.

[8] Morris Ernst, *The First Freedom.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1946.

[9] R. M. MacIver, *The Web of Government*, p. 221. New York: Macmillan Co., 1948.

economic power perhaps cannot be separated from political power; that to gain political power, business must, among other things, manipulate the media. But he denies that large-scale activities are irreconcilable with democracy; there are ways of making them compatible. In the interests of democracy, he thinks, policy control of the media must be shifted back to the people affected by the decisions of the policy-makers. He believes that there can be such democratic participation in policy-making, but with experts to implement the policy decisions.[10]

Nixon also doubts that it is possible to return to the yesteryear of many small, diversified communications units. He remarks that the one-newspaper town is not an evil in itself; what matters is the sense of social responsibility possessed by the publisher. One poor newspaper is no worse than several poor ones, he adds; and one good newspaper is better than several poor ones. Believing that journalism is entering a new period in its history, that of "scientific direction," he suggests that the fruits of communications research may make the press more and more responsive to the wants and needs of the community.[11]

Still other writers discount the dangers of concentration. A common argument is that the nature of press competition has changed. *Fortune* magazine for April, 1947, reviewing the report of the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press, questioned the often-made assumption that a smaller proportion of the people can express their ideas in the press today than in former times. *Fortune* contended that too much fuss has been made about the diminishing number of newspapers and of the increase in one-newspaper cities. Said *Fortune:*

> The trend cannot be interpreted except in the light of the development of transport, which brings out-of-town dailies to ever widening areas. It cannot be interpreted except in terms of the rise of weekly news magazines, general magazines, radio newscasting, radio forums, national hook-ups, and the nationally syndicated column. Competition has

[10] Robert A. Brady, "Monopoly and the First Freedom," *Hollywood Quarterly*, II (April, 1947), 225-41.

[11] Raymond B. Nixon, "Implications of the Decreasing Numbers of Competitive Newspapers," *Communications in Modern Society*, pp. 42-57. Edited by Wilbur Schramm. Urbana, Illinois. University of Illinois Press, 1948.

not disappeared; its form has changed. And no basic research has been done to determine exactly what its present form is or what its present effects are.[12]

THE COMMERCIAL BASIS OF THE PRESS SYSTEM

Posing perhaps even more perplexing problems than concentration is the commercial basis of the press. The problems it raises become especially serious in view of the high degree of ownership concentration. The situation can be simplified somewhat as follows: To remain free, the publisher must be self-supporting; to be self-supporting, the publisher needs a large number of readers. If his publication does not carry advertising, he needs many readers to keep down the per unit cost. If his publication does carry advertising, he needs a large number of readers not only to keep down per unit cost but also to justify profitable advertising rates. In either event, therefore, there is pressure upon the publisher to appeal to an ever expanding reader group. As the reader group widens, the publisher's chosen public tends to determine what he can and cannot publish.

In order to attract and retain readers, the publisher will tend to give the majority what he thinks it wants and agrees with. He will tend to avoid publishing material which the majority does not agree with or has not accepted. In general, the publisher seems to accept the long-term social and cultural goals of the majority, which has seldom been credited with the origination and introduction of new ideas. At times the publisher may, of course, present or espouse short-term goals differing from those of the majority of his readers.

Klapper has suggested that the commercial sponsorship of the mass media and the resultant necessity of pleasing as many persons as possible work to perpetuate the status quo. "Pleasing the majority necessarily involves hewing to majority views," he writes. "He who espouses minority opinion automatically alienates the majority; he who would immediately enlist the crowd must voice the attitude already sanctioned by most of its members." By entertainment content, by advertising, he says, the press reaffirms these sanctioned mores.[13]

[12] Editorial: "Dangers to Press Freedom," *Fortune*, XXV (April, 1947), 5.

[13] Joseph T. Klapper, "Mass Media and the Engineering of Consent," *American Scholar*, XVII (Autumn, 1948), 419-29.

Advertisers wish their messages to appear in media which do not offend the majority and which do not attack the system under which business operates. Publishers, to get large audiences, are chary of offending many readers. As a result of these two conditions, entertainment in the mass media strengthens existing attitudes. Popular magazine stories, researchers have found, while overtly accepting racial and religious equality, in fact perpetuate minority stereotypes, approve caste lines and, in Klapper's words, "picture a world where the highest income is reserved for white, American-born gentiles who practice the Protestant ethic."

Popular magazine biographies over the past half-century, one research worker found, have dealt with heroes who since birth embodied popularly sanctioned values. Advertising plays on existing drives and values to sell products, and in doing so it reinforces them. By its nature, it has a monopoly position; "two cigarette manufacturers may compete with each other," says Klapper, "but neither will ever directly criticize the other's product, and never will either allow some other advertiser to inveigh against smoking."

Even casual observation shows that as the press seeks its large audiences, it resorts to the expedient of mass production techniques. The formula becomes important and is reflected in a general sameness of content and in a sameness of techniques for presenting content. Economy imposes limitations on the gathering of material. Newspapers—and to a considerably lesser degree magazines—get their material largely at stations of record.

Lippmann has observed that, since papers cannot possibly witness all of the happenings in the world, they station reporters at such points of record as courts, city halls, and so on. As papers can record only what occurs in unmistakable form, news becomes not a mirror of social conditions but of an aspect that has obtruded itself.[14] Almost inevitably, in its quest for the large audience, the press in its content aims at the lowest common denominator. Content is thinned; drama, sensation, the unusual are exploited. Cultural minorities become "disenfranchised"; for it is often unprofitable for the publisher to cultivate certain reader groups because of their small numbers, their low purchasing power, or other reasons.

[14] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922.

Improving the Social Services of the Press

In the face of all this, what can be done? How can we make sure that the press will do a good job of enlightening the public, of servicing the political system, of safeguarding personal liberties? How can we make sure of a press adequate for the needs of contemporary society? Since dozens of books have already dealt with those questions, these few concluding paragraphs obviously can do no more than suggest some general points in tackling a problem for which there is no simple panacea.

First, a realistic solution to the problem must take into account the commercial basis of the press. Our system of press support is conditioned by the social and economic system within which the press operates. There is small chance of abolishing commercial support, even if it were desirable to do so. Granting that, we can see that publications without advertising do not offer a satisfactory solution. Despite its shortcomings, advertising does confer a number of material benefits on society; and even if it did not, it has become so thoroughly ingrained in our press system that it could scarcely be seriously diminished. Moreover, although advertising accounts for some of the undesirable aspects of our press system, it is not solely to blame.

Nor does breaking up concentration in the communications system now seem a realistic corrective. The commercial basis of the press, not the mere size of the units, has caused many of the undesirable practices of the press and much of the undesirable content. It is hard to see how small publications, any more than large ones, can escape the economic compulsions of the system. In view of the pressure for large audiences inherent in the commercial system, it is also hard to see how small publications could be kept from growing once more into large ones. Behind proposals to break up large communications units appear to be two suppositions of dubious validity. One is that multiplicity of publications necessarily means multiplicity of viewpoints. The other is that the small publisher is more responsible than the large one.

Secondly, any satisfactory proposal for the improvement of press performance must be based on the combined efforts of press, public, and government. On the one hand, we cannot expect the press alone to remedy its shortcomings; on the other hand, there are

dangers in granting too much power over the media of communication to even a democratic government. Looking to the press alone to do away with its faults carries a rather strong implication that publishers are willfully negligent instead of handicapped to a large degree by the nature of the system. True, more publishers should put responsibility for carrying out their public service functions above profit. But in a very real sense, the press can be no better than the public it serves because it is dependent upon the public for support—directly in the case of books and some magazines, indirectly in the case of other magazines and virtually all newspapers.

Looking to the government alone is not desirable. Although the government perhaps may safely take a more active part in communications than it has in the recent past, there are good reasons for being wary of granting even a democratic government excessive power over the communications system. Even if one trusts a democratic government with the operation of the press system, there is a strong possibility that the media content would still be prepared for mass audiences; and as a result of this mass appeal, the content in the end might very well be no better than that of the commercial media and perhaps worse.

The public can, if it wills, assist considerably in improving press performance. If the public raises its own level of taste, then demands a higher standard in the media, the press may well oblige. The public can voice its discontent with low-denominator content, can protest bias and distortion when they truly occur and when it observes them, can lend its support to the worth-while publications and withdraw its support from the irresponsible ones. The public can willingly bear a larger share of the cost of some communications services, especially those furnished by publications servicing intellectual and cultural minorities.

Thirdly, our traditional theory of press freedom might well be re-examined, not with a view to abandoning it but with a view to adapting it to current conditions and requirements. Changing conditions have altered the nature of the right of freedom of the press. Originally, freedom of the press was a personal right. It could be exercised by anyone with the comparatively small sum needed to establish a newspaper or magazine, to issue a pamphlet or book. Today, however, the high cost of starting new communications

ventures and the high degree of concentration in the communications field have left the large majority of persons unable to exercise their right of free expression. Their right is held in trust for them, for all practical purposes, by the persons in an economic position to operate the media. Thus, the press should give space to a wide range of representative views, not just the views of the majority, not just the views of the media operators themselves.

In the face of concentration of ownership and the commercial nature of the press, in the face of "disenfranchisement" of cultural minorities and a narrowing of the areas of free discussion in the media, we might inquire if our traditional concept of negative freedom, the concept of "freedom from," is adequate for the needs of society. Traditional theory of press freedom was founded largely on the philosophical assumptions of the Enlightenment. These assumptions have been strongly challenged by the revolution in contemporary thought. Quite possibly, as Jensen has suggested, this revolution in thought might furnish the ideological basis for a new concept of human liberty and freedom of the press.[15]

Such a new concept might involve a judicious blending of "freedom from" and "freedom for." Under the concept, we might explore the possibility of cautiously allowing government and of encouraging the large private foundations to join private enterprise as working partners in the communications system. We might find it desirable to encourage government to become a facilitating agency to help remove obstacles to the free flow of information and ideas. We might even find it desirable to encourage government, along with private foundations, to participate in the communications system, especially in serving minorities which the commercial press now finds it inexpedient or unprofitable to serve.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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[15] Jay W. Jensen, "Toward a Solution of the Problem of Freedom of the Press," *Journalism Quarterly,* XXVII (Fall, 1950), 399-408.

throughout his collected writings in their various editions. The changing nature and functions of the American newspaper from Colonial times to the present are expertly described in Frank Luther Mott's standard history, *American Journalism* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1950). The history of American magazines and their social and economic importance are treated by James Playsted Wood in *Magazines in the United States* (New York: Ronald Press, 1949). A brief but good picture of book publishing is given by William Miller in *The Book Industry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949). Manifold problems of free communications and their proposed solutions are described by Zechariah Chafee, Jr., in his two volumes, *Government and Mass Communications* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947). Chafee's work is an outgrowth of the evaluation and recommendations made by the Commission on Freedom of the Press in a brief, controversial, stimulating volume, *A Free and Responsible Press* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947).

In formulating some of the ideas in this chapter, I was greatly stimulated by discussions with Jay W. Jensen of the School of Journalism and Communications at the University of Illinois. I am, of course, fully responsible for the material in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Motion Pictures in Relation to Social Controls

ROBERT W. WAGNER

Film as a Mass Medium

What influenced the content of the last motion picture you saw? Who was really responsible for the images and sounds seen and heard by the audience? Why was a picture made on this theme instead of on one of hundreds of other topics about which a film might have been produced? How does it happen that you, as a movie-goer, sometimes complain about shallow and tawdry film treatments of reality, distortions of truth, and double features, yet seemingly cannot do much about it? How can you, on the other hand, support the efforts of those producers who have made, and are making, really good films?

About four hundred feature motion pictures come out of Hollywood each year. It cannot be reasonably expected that all these pictures should or could be masterpieces. One does not expect every novel which is published to be on the best-seller list. Yet, for the fifty years during which story-films have been produced, religious, political, and educational leaders have regarded them suspiciously, with a critical eye. And the movie-makers have reciprocated with mutual distrust and suspicion. Why does the motion picture cause such concern? Are we expecting too much of those who make motion pictures, in contrast to those who operate other mass media?

The answers to the problems of the theatrical film can be intelligently arrived at only through an understanding of the motion-picture industry itself and how it came to be what it is.

Although films resemble other mass media in some ways, they are sharply different in others. The motion picture is made for a general, nonspecific, mass audience. Every Hollywood film is made

for everybody. Thus, there are no films produced especially for children. We have no specialized films for women, corresponding to the woman's page in a newspaper, or to the soap opera in radio which is designed for 20,000,000 daytime listeners, most of whom are housewives. If we exclude a few short subjects on wildlife, hunting, or sports, we have nothing in theatrical production which corresponds to a man's magazine. What we do have are pictures which try to interest everyone, and offend no one. And the thing which interests everyone, the producer concludes, is action—action about love, crime, and sex, woven into a fantasy which spells escape from reality.

The motion picture is unlike radio, television, and the press in another respect. The general, nonspecific audience of the motion picture pays for the whole product. Advertising supports radio, TV, magazines, and the newspaper, but the ultimate cost of a movie must be paid off at the ticket office. If the press had to operate on the same basis, your daily paper would cost about fifteen cents a copy.

A third distinction about movies is that its audience is composed chiefly of young people. The *1950 Film Daily Yearbook* estimates that 10 per cent of the persons attending the motion-picture theater are between 5 and 11 years of age; 20 per cent are between 12 and 17; 35 per cent are between 18 and 30; 20 per cent are from 31 to 45, and only 15 per cent are over 45.[1] These young people respond to the personalities and events they see on the screen in many overt ways. What they see may influence their attitudes or give them specific, memorable items of information. One analysis of fan mail received by an actor in one of the major studios showed that 96 per cent of the writers were under 21, and that 53 per cent were under 13 years of age.[2] A study of the composition of movie audiences, made by Lazarsfeld, showed that "age is the most important personal factor by which the movie audience is characterized," and that "the decline of frequent movie attendance with increasing age is very sharp. No other mass medium shows a com-

[1] *1950 Film Daily Yearbook of the Motion Pictures*, p. 81. New York 18: Film Daily (1501 Broadway), 1950 (32nd annual edition).

[2] Leo C. Rosten, *Hollywood; The Movie Colony; The Movie Makers*, p. 411. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1941.

parable trend."[8] It is, moreover, an audience habituated to moviegoing. It is an audience which comes afresh to the cinema every generation.

A fourth specialized characteristic of the motion picture as a mass medium is that the audience must go to the theater. A movie is not delivered on your doorstep, is not brought free of charge to your living room like a radio program. And if first-run films are ever seen on television, it will be because some way is worked out to make a mass audience pay for the performance through some system such as Phonevision where the office of the Bell Telephone Company becomes a remote-control box office. The motion-picture audience, television films apart for the moment, is a mass audience in the sense that large groups of people are assembled in one place at the same time, on a voluntary basis, with at least a general knowledge of what they are about to see.

Finally, the production methods in the making of a radio program, a television broadcast, or an issue of a daily newspaper are historically different from those involved in the production of a motion picture. It is to these beginnings of the industry, then, and to these methods that we must turn to assess the present condition and problems of the motion picture as a mass medium.

Patents and Properties

Basically, the motion-picture camera and projector are nothing more than tachistoscopic devices for recording and projecting a series of still pictures in a succession and progression which, by virtue of a peculiarity of the human eye known as persistence of vision, makes these static images appear to move. Such devices were worked out by Thomas A. Edison as early as 1889. Edison also worked out a system to make "talking pictures," using his phonograph in conjunction with his motion-picture camera-projector. Thomas Armat, Francis Jenkins, and others in the United States and abroad developed the mechanics of projection further, and George Eastman developed the necessary flexible film base to replace glass and paper emulsion supports which were unsuitable for the motion-picture process. Color and three-dimensional pictures

[8] Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "Audience Research in the Movie Field," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, CCLIV (November, 1947), 162-63.

were experimented with at an early date, and the sound, color, "3-D" film was anticipated almost from the beginning. William Friese-Green, an English photographer, patented a stereoscopic projector in 1893 for use with color films.

Yet, many of the early technologists who toyed with moving pictures failed to appreciate their future attraction for the public. Edison felt that a projected picture (rather than one which could be seen only by one person at a time, as with his kinetoscope) would exhaust its potential audience too fast. And Seldes points out that "the brothers Lumiere . . . advised Georges Méliès that the moving picture 'might be exploited for a while as a scientific curiosity, but it has no commercial future.' "[4]

Nevertheless, Méliès went on to make his *Trip to the Moon* and other pioneering films, and in 1903 Edwin S. Porter made *The Great Train Robbery;* thus, the story-film came into being.

In 1907 Porter used an unknown actor by the name of David W. Griffith in one of his films produced in New York. Griffith eventually became a director and the man who liberated film from its mechanical fetters. He exploited the close-up, the fade-out, the flash-back, and many of the techniques which are now commonly used but which before that day were not recognized by directors, who, in the tradition of the theater, planted their cameras in what would correspond to the orchestra seats, shooting the entire action from this fixed position. Griffith's most famous film, *Birth of a Nation,* not only established film techniques but also opened up many of the industry-wide problems which will be discussed in the following pages.

Since the illusions thrown on the screen were fundamentally the products of technical skill and equipment, the development of the technology of film-making involved a struggle among the young film companies to gain control of key patents. In 1908, ten leading companies formed the Motion Picture Patents Company and, with the co-operation of the Eastman Kodak Company which agreed not to sell raw film to nonmembers, waged war on the Edison companies which held many of the basic patents for cameras and projectors. This so-called "patents-war" went on until 1917 when the

[4] Gilbert Seldes, *The Movies Come from America,* p. 18. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937.

United States Supreme Court finally decided against the legality of licensed film on patented projectors.[5]

The final struggle for the control of sound started in the early thirties. The Radio Corporation of America and Electrical Research Products, Incorporated, a subsidiary of Western Electric, through a series of alliances and agreements, finally came to dominate the field. These two corporations held a virtual monopoly in the field of sound-recording.

Meantime, other struggles were going on between the studios. The film-makers suddenly found themselves bidding against one another for another kind of property—the "stars." The "star" system came into being as movie audiences began to identify themselves with the charming, beautiful, brave, and exciting screen portrayals they saw acted out by people surrounded by the mystery and glamour of Hollywood. And Hollywood became an Olympus where the gods of the silver-screen lived in the mist created by the fan magazine, the gossip columnist, the Hollywood "reporter," and other by-products of the industry.

The studios competed in buying the best brains and talent of the American and European theaters, initiating a period in the development of the industry which was characterized by an influx of foreign stars and directors and by fabulous salaries to attract them. Brady points out in this connection that "the device of astronomical salaries for stars was originally evolved as a means of consolidating monopoly positions." [6]

Production, distribution, and exhibition soon became consolidated. Systems of chain theaters were bought or organized by the major producing companies, and, together with the control of production equipment and talent, the monopolistic trend of the industry became obvious. There was, too, a monopolization of film ideas.

In the early days of film-making, the ideas for a picture were made up in the head of the director. He improvised as he went along, always with the accent on action. As the trend toward longer

[5] Temporary National Economic Committee, 76th Congress, *Motion Picture Industry: Pattern of Control*, p. 4. Study made by Daniel Bertrand, W. Duane Evans, and E. L. Blanchard. *Investigation of Concentration of Economic Power*, Monograph No. 43. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1941.

[6] Robert A. Brady, "The Problem of Monopoly," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, CCLIV (November, 1947), 132.

films developed, the need for good story material developed, too. The director needed cohesive story ideas, ideas which could sustain interest for an hour and a half of film. With the advent of sound, the need for ideas became even greater, since the presence of dialogue as well as action required writing talent of the type generally associated with the novelist, the magazine-writer, or the playwright. The natural source of film ideas was, and is, the popular literature of the day and certain well-known classic writings.

Today, the industry still seeks to "corner" the best story material. Thousands of books, plays, and original stories are read by the story departments of the major studios. Each studio selects forty or fifty promising pieces of "property," buying the screen rights partly on the chance that a good film story might be made of it, partly to protect themselves by keeping the material from falling into the hands of readers in story departments of other studios. Needless to say, not all good ideas get onto the screen by this process. Some are held indefinitely. Others are rejected because they do not fit in with the studio's story requirements. Dore Schary, vice-president in charge of production for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, describes the story requirements of his studio as follows:

> First of all, a story must be "for us": It must fit our program, permit practical casting, and generally be ready to go. But it must also have wide appeal to all kinds of people, it must be adaptable to visual telling, contain fresh pictorial elements to satisfy the audience eye, must be built around strong and intriguing characters (preferably with a good part for one of our contract stars), permit telling on the screen in not much more than ninety minutes, be nontopical enough not to "date" before we get our investment back. And it must sparkle with enough of that intangible called showmanship to make millions of people hurry through their dinners on a rainy night and park too far from an overcrowded threatre because they just can't wait another day. This is an ideal, I'll admit, but we always try for the brass ring.[7]

Stories which fail to meet these requirements, at least on the surface, are, therefore, likely to be bad risks, poor investments. Those which measure up, those which appeal to "all kinds of people," which have action and eye-appeal, which match the talents of one of the studio's acting personalities, which can be put into

[7] Dore Schary, *Case History of a Movie*, pp. 8-9. New York: Random House, 1950.

ninety minutes of screen time, and which won't get out of date too soon, may be bought by the studio, in spite of the fact that the idea content may be juvenile, totally unrealistic, or similar to hundreds of other pictures made on the same theme.

By the time of World War I, the word "property" in Hollywood referred not only to production equipment, chains of theaters, and a staff of highly paid stars but also to story material—the actual content of motion pictures.

The Picture Business

Once it became clear that motion pictures were a commodity that people would "buy," American businessmen took an interest in this peep-show business. As with all businesses, a key objective has been to go on making money in order to make more pictures. The immediate importance of the economic aspects of film production is seen at once when we consider that it takes six months to a year to complete a picture; that its budget may run from $250,000 to more than a million dollars; and that it is expected to return close to 100 per cent of its investment within about a year after its release.[8]

Note that the cost of a single motion picture may be more than the cost of building an average-size radio or television station and that its return depends on a ninety-minute presentation which must, in a period of three days, prove itself to the audiences of a locality in any one theater. In few other businesses is such a quick return demanded or even expected.

But before the picture can be made at all, the necessary capital must be raised. Who pays for the risk? Like other businesses, the motion-picture industry relies on the banks for funds. However, banks which finance motion pictures consider this medium and all enterprises involving show business as unstable, uncertain ventures. Collateral is required. This may include the assurance of a good story, a director who has proven himself, starring players who are currently popular, commitments for studio space, and contracts which insure suitable distribution of the finished product.

As a result of the big money and extensive collateral involved

[8] Floyd B. Odlum, "Financial Organization of the Motion Picture Industry," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, CCLIV (November, 1947), 18-25.

in the making of a motion picture for theatrical release, a comparatively small group of people are privileged to make films for a great number of consumers. Control is centered in the hands of a few who have been able to exist in a fabulous industry whose whole history and weed-like growth can be told in terms of the life-story of some of the men, still living, who have pioneered the industry and made it what it is.

The industry was first represented by the "Big Three"—Edison, Biograph, and Vitagraph. By 1939 the field was largely dominated by the "Big Five"—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount, Warner Brothers, Radio Corporation of America, and Twentieth Century–Fox—and the three so-called "satellite" companies—Columbia, United Artists, and Universal-International. These eight companies produced about 70 per cent of all feature films made in the United States in 1945. They also controlled between 70 and 80 per cent of the metropolitan first-run theaters—the big, "people's palaces" where a film has its best chance of recognition and appreciation and where it can realize its greatest financial returns.[9] First-run theaters, controlled by these studios, came to represent 25 per cent of the total seating capacity of United States movie houses.[10]

As suggested earlier, many exhibitors in the pioneering days of the motion picture went into the production of films to insure a constant flow of "merchandise" to their retail "shelf." Carl Laemmle, for example, organized his Independent Motion Picture Company after prospering as an exhibitor. The ownership of chains of theaters made secure the exhibition outlets for the finished products. In order to further insure their investment, producing companies required exhibitors to contract for large blocks of films, regardless of content or quality. This was known as "block booking." In some cases, the exhibitor was further required to contract for films he had never seen and for some which might not even be in production at the time. This was known as "blind selling."

These practices were only part of the list of charges made against the industry on the basis of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. And in 1938 the Department of Justice filed a petition against the

[9] *1950 Film Daily Yearbook of the Motion Pictures, op. cit.*, p. 943.

[10] Temporary National Economic Committee, 76th Congress, *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 13.

"Big Eight," charging them with restraint of trade in the production, distribution, and exhibition of motion pictures in the United States and with violation of the Sherman Act.

Not until 1940 was agreement reached with the "Big Five." Although the suit was continued with Columbia, Universal, and United Artists, the five major studios—Paramount, R.K.O., Warners, Loews, and Twentieth Century–Fox—agreed that after August 31, 1941, they would sell films in blocks of five pictures each and that blind selling would be eliminated by provisions for previewing each film in the exchange area where it would be released.

In 1949, a final decree from the United States Statutory Court in New York brought about the divorcement of production and exhibition functions which had been sought by the Government since 1938. Warner Brothers, Loews, and Twentieth Century–Fox were ordered to submit plans for the ultimate separation of their distribution and production business from their exhibition system, this to take place within one year from the date of the decree. These provisions, together with certain other concessions made by the big five of the industry, constitute the "Consent Decree" which temporarily, at least, ended the suit against the companies.[11]

The motion-picture business, like other American businesses, has gone through its period of rapid expansion, of competitive individual enterprise, has developed its leadership from a few rugged individualists who got into the infant industry, moved it from New York and Chicago to California, and built its studios, its "stars," its theaters. Like the history of the railroads, we have seen the monopolistic tendency of the motion-picture business grow. We have seen the inevitable counter-movement against such monopoly. But today, since it still takes big money to make motion pictures, competition for the American theatrical screen is relatively small. A few foreign films and independently produced documentaries have infiltrated. But what is seen on the screen is mainly the reflection of the world as seen through the eyes of a handful of professional film-makers and financiers, who represent "the industry."

The Content of Films

In so young an industry it is inevitable that the novelty of movie-

[11] *1950 Film Daily Yearbook, op. cit.*, pp. 934-50.

making must take some time to wear off. The current renewal of interest in "3-D" reflects the preoccupation with cinematic effects over film content, a preoccupation expressed by Orson Welles who, when visiting a major studio for the first time is said to have exclaimed: "This is the biggest electric train any boy ever had!"

Although we have been comparing the film industry with other forms of American business, the making of a motion picture can never be as simple as the production of an automobile or a pair of shoes. The psychological effect of an industry which is trading on human emotions created by flickering shadows and sounds can never be simple. For this reason, from the very start and continuing with increasing force, the industry is being made to feel its social responsibility more and more, with a result that today some people consider the making of motion pictures to be not so much an industry as a public utility.

The libertarian philosophy and the philosophy of social responsibility (see chap. ii) come to a sharp focus in the motion-picture problem. The exhibitor and the producer continue to use, although with lessening effect, the argument that they are simply purveyors of entertainment, that they give the public what it wants. And what the public wants, they say, is fantasy, a chance to laugh, cry, and escape from reality into the dream world of the picture palace, to live vicariously and dangerously and romantically, and to do the things which in real life they don't dare to do, or which they will never have the chance to do. "Our intent," says the movie-maker "is simply to entertain. This and nothing more."

Now, people do need "escape." They do need "re-creation." The motion-picture producer, being a shrewd businessman and a practical psychologist, can turn out pictures enough to satisfy this need. And he knows that he doesn't have to produce an Academy-award winner to do it. "Horse operas" will do it. So will most "B" pictures—and even those shadowy, shabby productions designed for the "sex circuit."

But the reverse side of the coin is that experiences do not happen in a vacuum. The content of the films affects the motion-picture audience. This does not mean that the effects are simple, linear, or immediate. Certainly it is clear that immediate effects may be slight and that there is no reason to believe that movies are the prime

cause of juvenile delinquency or divorce or any social ill. Their role may be to maintain present attitudes or outlooks or, indeed, to re-enforce them. But motion pictures, like other mass media, are not innocuous. They maintain, re-enforce, or shift learning.

In another section of this book Schramm discusses the communication process and the effect of individual backgrounds on what is "seen" and what is not seen in communications systems, film included. The most innocuous film, shown in the right climate of opinion and at a decisive moment, may take on a glow of meaning not even dreamed of by the film-maker who is communicating with a large, unseen audience. For example, some pictures shown widely in the northern part of the United States cannot be shown in the southern part. Some pictures shown in New York State cannot pass the Division of Film Censorship in Ohio. Whatever Hollywood does, however clearly labeled "For Entertainment Only," deep-seated and fundamental ways of "seeing" films vary with the audience, with the locality, and with the climate of the times.

Furthermore, as Fearing points out, "it is probably impossible to construct a coherent sequence of audio-visual images involving human action and interaction without at the same time presenting an attitude or ideological position toward that action." [12] Morality is always eventually expressed in terms of behavior or action. Every action which is not meaningless involves intent and, hence, a value judgment. And actions and behaviorisms of people are the essence of the film story.

What are some of the values expressed in the American-made film? Wolfenstein and Leites, in an analysis of the content of sixty-seven Hollywood films released between September 1, 1945, and September 1, 1946, conclude:

> The major plot configuration in American films contrasts with both the British and the French. Winning is terrifically important and always possible, though it may be a tough fight. The conflict is not an internal one; it is not our own impulses which endanger us nor our own scruples that stand in our way. The hazards are all external, but they are not

[12] Franklin Fearing, "Influence of the Movies on Attitude and Behavior," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, CCLIV (November, 1947), 78.

rooted in the nature of life itself. They are the hazards of a particular situation with which we find ourselves confronted. The hero is typically in a strange town where there are apt to be dangerous men and women of ambiguous character and where the forces of law and order are not to be relied on. If he sizes up the situation correctly, if he does not go off half-cocked, but is still able to beat the other fellow to the punch once he is sure who the enemy is, if he relies on no one but himself, if he demands sufficient evidence of virtue from the girl, he will emerge triumphant. He will defeat the dangerous men, get the right girl, and show the authorities what's what.[13]

An earlier analysis of five hundred feature films revealed ten classes of themes: crime, sex, love, comedy, mystery, war, children, history, travel, and social propaganda. The three major themes of pictures made during the 1930's were love (29.6 per cent), crime (27.4 per cent), and sex (15.0 per cent), or a total of 72 per cent of all themes.[14]

These, of course, are basic motives in drama. They are inescapable. They are life. But the critical point is the kind of handling given the theme. It may be a juvenile, unrealistic treatment. Or it may be a mature, honest presentation which helps us see ourselves and our way of living a little more clearly. Hollywood has made such mature pictures. *Pasteur*, *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Men*, *Grapes of Wrath*, and others can be quickly mentioned as examples of mature films.

In making such films, Seldes points out:

> There is no need to abandon the tempo of the American film—only to vary it in harmony with the character of any given picture. There is no need to abandon the star system—only to use stars intelligently, so that they are integrated into stories, not outside them. There is no need to abandon plot—only to develop plot logically out of character instead of distorting character to fit stereotyped plots.
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> In sum, the motion picture need only go on to its natural fulfillment in the direction it originally took, when it tried to tell stories to people. It has degenerated into telling myths for children. A story is always single, individual, and enhances our understanding of the many-sided

[13] Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites, *Movies: A Psychological Study*, p. 298. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1950.

[14] W. W. Charters, *Motion Pictures and Youth*, p. 49. New York: Macmillan Co., 1935.

mystery of the human spirit; and myth repeated without profound belief tends to become a formula, totally without reference to the actuality of our own lives, manufactured without creativeness, and deadening our capacity to see life clearly.[15]

Social Responsibility

The production of mature films implies a mature industry to manufacture the product. It also assumes a mature audience, which is to say, a mature society. It presupposes a society in which a coherent value system has been developed, a society with common goals, common morality, and common understandings. It assumes social responsibility.

Since, however, we live in a society that can hardly be described as socially mature, and since we are far from decided on what kind of life we, as a nation and as a world, want to pursue, it is easy to see how the motion picture as a reflection and re-creation of that life has become involved in the conflicts we see about us every day. The honest depiction of these conflicts and the clarification of the issues involved would, indeed, be a mark of maturity for the movies. Some films have attempted this. *A Man To Remember, Home of the Brave, The Ox-bow Incident, The Southerner,* and others have set forth important issues and conflicts of our time. But each person views the issues and the films through his own lenses and agrees or disagrees accordingly. Conflicting judgments are made, and the question of right and wrong is involved.

Morality is always eventually expressed in terms of behavior or action. Every action involves intent and, hence, the question of good or evil. This is as true of a novel as it is of a film. But the motion picture is a special problem in this respect. Martin Quigley, long associated with the motion-picture industry, points out:

> The transcendental potency of the entertainment motion picture, in its country of origin and everywhere it goes, is due to the unique graphicness of the medium, plus the vast audiences which its extraordinary appeal has gained. It is thus enabled to exert an unequaled influence on the thought, and consequently the behavior, of people the whole world over. Hence, there arises an awful accountability—an accountability which insistently demands that this powerful medium be so directed as

[15] Gilbert Seldes, *The Great Audience,* pp. 87-88. New York: Viking Press, 1950.

to aid and not hinder mankind's struggle toward the fulfillment of its destiny.[16]

The industry bears a social responsibility to the estimated fifty-four million Americans who go to the movies every week and to the foreign audience from whom the industry gets 40 per cent of its revenue.[17] It bears, above all, an accountability to the youth of the nation and the world who attend film showings, even though these are intended for amusement or entertainment only.

Every study of importance has shown that motion pictures do produce effects; sometimes stalactitic, as noted by Schramm. These effects have been measured in terms of everything from restlessness in sleep to overt examples of behavior inspired by a film. Changes in attitudes have been noted by Ramseyer, and direct learning of information by film has been demonstrated by Holaday, Stoddard, and, more recently, by studies conducted by the armed services.

The influence of the "entertainment" film thus transcends the purpose of the film-maker. It makes him a party to the social responsibility—shared with parents, teachers, churchmen, and other members of our society—of determining what kind of children we shall have and, eventually, what kind of world we shall live in.

Now, everybody has his own ideas on this matter of where we should be going and what values should be stressed. And the motion-picture industry has inadvertently, but through a natural flow of events, got itself into the war of values simply because it is a part of the society and the world in which that war is going on. People may still go to the movies to laugh, cry, escape reality. But this does not mean that such films do not have more significance. *What* are the people laughing at? Or at *whom?* And what *kinds* of actions or ideas make them cry? What form does their escape from reality take? Someone once said with regard to fiction that the quality of the world *from* which we escape isn't as important as the kind of world *to* which we escape.

Traditionally, nations, through their governments, have expressed and codified the law of the land. In a totalitarian state, the codifica-

[16] Martin Joseph Quigley, "Importance of the Entertainment Film," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, CCLIV (November, 1947), 69.

[17] Eric Johnston, *1953 Film Daily Yearbook*, p. 51. New York 18: Film Daily (1501 Broadway), 1953 (35th annual edition).

tion extends to the regulation of all forms of communication. The Nazi film, says Kracauer, reflected German culture and nationalist psychology, and, in the hands of the minister of propaganda, motion pictures made in the Reich presented the Nazis exactly as they wanted to be seen, reinforcing the doctrine of the National Socialist State.[18] Lenin saw the motion picture as a tool of propaganda for the Communist-party doctrine.

But in democracy, the question of controls is a delicate one. Government is traditionally obliged not to interfere with the motion-picture business as private enterprise, while at the same time it must provide protection against the allegedly licentious, immoral, sacrilegious, obscene, and indecent.

The only alternative to government control is, of course, self-regulation. Accordingly, when the motion-picture industry faced the threat of increasing censorship, especially by state and local governments, as a result of a series of scandals and unfavorable publicity involving important screen personalities, the producers decided to assume the responsibility themselves in order to forestall action which might curtail their freedom.

Censorship

The threat of government censorship, coupled with the protests of organized citizens groups throughout the country has always hung over Hollywood. Between 1915 and 1920, several attempts were made to introduce bills in Congress to tighten federal regulation of the industry, and, in 1921, "nearly one hundred measures relative to the movies were introduced in the legislatures of forty-seven states." [19]

Chicago passed restrictive motion-picture legislation in 1907, Pennsylvania in 1911, and Ohio and Kansas in 1913. In 1915, the United States Supreme Court sustained the right of censorship by the states as a reasonable exercise of police power. At that time, Justice McKenna set the motion picture apart from the newspaper by his declaration that "the exhibition of moving pictures is a busi-

[18] Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1947.

[19] Ruth A. Inglis, *Freedom of the Movies: A Report on Self-Regulation*, p. 70. Prepared for the Commission on Freedom of the Press. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947.

ness pure and simple, originated and conducted for profit, like other spectacles, not to be regarded, nor intended to be regarded, by the Ohio constitution, we think, as part of the press of the country or as organs of public opinion." [20] This opinion has been contested from that day to this.

Today, the states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Virginia maintain censorship. Twenty major cities, in addition to Chicago, censor films shown locally. In certain cities, such as Washington, Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, and Greeley (Colorado), police departments have censorship powers. In Chicago, Des Moines, and Kansas City, boards of censorship do the job. Certain cities and certain states, such as Georgia and Idaho, prohibit Sunday showings, but the pattern varies because of local options in some areas and because of a failure of the courts to uphold "Blue Laws" in other cases such as those in Virginia.[21]

The National Board of Review was founded in 1909, a few months after the mayor of New York City revoked the licenses of every motion-picture theater in New York City as a result of a series of sensational pictures shown in the local theaters. This board, composed of a group of citizens whose task was to preview and evaluate films prior to release, received its financial support from the industry and was devoted to the promotion of good films and to the idea that legal censorship was to be avoided. The board came under considerable critical fire from those who felt that it was an apologist for the industry and was failing to meet its real responsibility.

The industry, again sensing its vulnerability, appointed Will H. Hayes, Postmaster General under Harding, to head up a new organization to be known as the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America. Hayes served from 1922 to 1945 and was succeeded by Eric Johnston in a post which required, in the interest of the industry itself, the establishment of new standards of production to keep the industry "morally clean," "artistically elevating," and as free from outside controls as possible. In 1945, under the leadership of Johnston, the name of the organization was changed to the Motion Picture Association of America, which now includes

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

[21] *1953 Film Daily Yearbook of Motion Pictures, op. cit.*, pp. 865-69.

three branches. The most important branch, the Production Code Administration, passes judgment upon all scripts, which, since 1931, the members of the Association have been required to submit for approval before going into production.

The Legion of Decency, organized in 1934 by Catholic bishops of the country at their annual meeting, instituted the only successful threat of economic boycott of the motion picture. No litigation was involved here. It was simply a matter of having Catholics all over the country sign a pledge that they would not support films considered by the Legion to be undesirable. Box office receipts fell. In Philadelphia, the drop was as sharp as 40 per cent.[22] The campaign was effective. The industry took serious steps toward further reforms, one of which imposed a $25,000 fine as penalty for producing, distributing, or exhibiting any picture without the approval of the Production Code Administration, which had been given greater powers than ever before. Joseph I. Breen, director of the Production Code Administration, is now so often consulted on scripts, stories, and treatments that the term, "the Breen Office," is more commonly heard than "The Production Code Administration Office." A full appreciation of the types of cases upon which Breen and his office have to pass judgment may be gained only from a reading of the Code itself. Such a reading will make it quite clear that this form of precensorship would be considered quite inacceptable to the press.

The local censorship of newsreels, in particular, is inconsistent with the lack of censorship of television news and other news-reporting agencies. The theater newsreel is presently working under the handicap of time. News events reach us via television much faster and with more immediacy than through the theater newsreel, and in the future the latter may have to become a more editorialized, magazine-type presentation in order to service the public by getting behind the news on a thoughtful, less superficial level. Legally, however, the newsreel has been lumped with the entertainment film and has been subject to the same kind of censorship in some states, as, for example, Ohio.

Early in 1953, Senate Bill 159 was introduced by Ohio Senator Charles A. Mosher, in an attempt to do away with all film censor-

[22] Inglis, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

ship laws in the state.[23] The measure was withdrawn for lack of support, and in its place a second bill was introduced which was intended to eliminate only the censorship of newsreels. This bill was passed, and censorship of newsreels in Ohio was abolished in October, 1953.

Censorship of the motion picture takes many forms. It is found in federal laws such as those regulating the import and export of films, in state and local censorship rulings, and in the self-imposed censorship of scripts and films by the Production Code Administration. Special-interest groups in this country and in foreign lands where American films are shown may also voice disapproval of certain films which conflict with their own standards. And finally, there is a kind of censorship which grows from the fact that truth is hard to portray. There are artistic, technical, and human barriers which make it impossible to codify "good" and "bad," which make it difficult to present all sides fairly and to please everyone with a completely objective and uncolored picture of the kaleidoscopic world in which we live. Dewey writes:

> Rigid moral codes that attempt to lay down definite injunctions and prohibitions for every occasion in life turn out in fact loose and slack. Stretch ten commandments or any other number as far as you will by ingenious exegesis, yet acts unprovided for by them will occur.[24]

When the Breen office rejects a film like *Bicycle Thief* as "indecent and unacceptable," how can the American film producer be scolded for not making the mature, realistic, and honest films we would have him make? When censors in an important southern city ban a picture like *Curley* because white children are shown playing with Negro children, how can we hope for more films which deal intelligently with our social problems?

Toward Maturity

It would appear that the maturity we expect of the motion picture will have to exist also in the society of which the motion-picture industry is a part. Although we may expect standards in

[23] It should be noted that a part of the fees derived from film censorship in Ohio are used to purchase films for the state's Slide and Film Exchange, which services the public schools of the state.

[24] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p 103. New York· Modern Library, 1930.

Hollywood which equal standards of morality the country over, we cannot expect them to be much better than those of the country as a whole.

We do not mean to speak of "maturity" glibly. It is not an easy goal to achieve. It is even somewhat hard to define. But certainly it is a quality of honesty, integrity, and respect for the dignity of human life and democratic living which can pervade a comedy, a tragedy, a western, or any other kind of film. Mature films will illuminate conduct, will enable us to live, for a moment, in close harmony and understanding with the lives of others. They will enable us to see ourselves as others see us. Such films will not necessarily all be great social comments. They may still be diverting. They may relax and amuse. Maturity requires only that they not be stupid, dishonest, or childish.

How, then, can we—as movie-goers—promote the production of such films? How can we proceed effectively in view of the monopolistic condition found in an industry which controls patents, production equipment, talent, and story material; an industry which has based its defense of shallow film stories on the appeal of such material to a mass audience which, it is claimed, wants nothing more than escape and amusement?

First, we must remember that, while we are part of a large, movie-going public, we are more importantly members of smaller groups. As a result of its tendency to look upon the American film audience as "the public," rather than as "the American publics," Hollywood has chosen to limit its market to younger, more immature members of our society. As members of more mature publics—parents and teachers groups, film councils, discussion groups, participants in adult-education programs—we must make our needs felt. We must not relinquish our right as consumers to demand what we want.

Our influence must be more than a boycott of poor films. It must include active support of good films and positive demand for better films. With the divorcement of exhibition from production and distribution, we may be able to deal more directly with the managers of our local theaters.

Many theater managers are genuinely interested in what the community thinks of their offerings. Some, for example, may be

immediately open to the suggestion that there is an audience for good foreign films, for special showings of film classics, and for reshowings of really good current films, including documentaries.

Other exhibitors may not be easy to approach. Many theater operators are still close to the "peep-show" tradition, evaluating good and bad wholly in terms of present box-office returns. In such cases, actions speak louder than words. Film Festivals might be popularized so the general public can get a taste of the great diversity and rich content of nontheatrical films. Community groups, working through a local film council, may meet with exhibitors to make them aware of the kinds of pictures which the membership of these groups are willing to actively support and promote. Parents and teachers groups might enlist the support of local newspaper editors to get better publicity on good films. More responsible film reviewers are also needed. The canned reviews written by studio publicity departments and reprinted verbatim on the theater page of many newspapers must be replaced by critical evaluations which discuss the content of the film intelligently and give the public an honest account of what the picture is about.

Such action may cause the exhibitor to take a new look at his responsibility to serve the diverse needs of his community, and he may, in turn, pass this reaction on to the producer in terms of a willingness to pay higher rental rates for the kind of films the local audience demands.

Group influence may also be brought to bear directly on the producer. The producer is the key man in the production of American films. It is he who selects the story, the screen writer, the director, and the principal stars in the picture. He supervises the final editing and is responsible for bringing the picture in under the budget and on time. He must see that his picture meets all the requirements—financial, artistic, and administrative—during the production period. It is to the producer that, in the long run, we must direct our applause or our criticism. Good producers leave an unmistakable mark on their work, a stamp of their judgment in making such pictures as *Home of the Brave* (Stanley Kramer), *Pinky* (Darryl F. Zanuck), *The Snake Pit* (Hal B. Wallis), *Lost Boundaries* (Louis de Rochemont), and *Miracle on 34th Street* (George Seaton).

The better Hollywood producers, sensitive to the nature of the times in which they live, are socially responsible. They are also shrewd showmen with good business sense. Many of them realize that the future of the industry depends on new insights into what the audience really wants, instead of always falling back on the formula picture. Dore Schary describes how a producer successfully strikes out in a new direction in his case history of the production of *The Next Voice You Hear:*

> With *The Next Voice*, all we had to go on were the axioms that "message" pictures drive people away from the theatres, and religion is poison at the box-office. We would have both. Balancing these considerations was the conviction that we could make a whale of an interesting and exciting picture; that in the present disturbed state of the world a lot of people needed the assurance and comfort that this story could bring, and that if you supply a real need you usually somehow get compensated for it. Also, any showman is bound to have in the back of his mind the tempting realization that it's often the gambling pictures which make the smashes: still fresh in my own mind was the success of *Battleground*, the first film to break through the latest of the recurring taboos against pictures about war.[25]

Producers of first rank know that good pictures, mature pictures, can be good box-office prospects. They need to be supported in this belief. Their pictures need public support. The producer seeks it in the "sneak preview," he looks for it from the competent reviewer, and he wants it from the big audience. Schary, in writing about the audience reaction to *The Next Voice* as reported by comments written on preview cards, says:

> We had gambled that audiences would accept a picture about decent people doing good things, had risked violating the axioms that message pictures drive people away from the theatres and religion is poison at the box office. In the space left open for comments, card after card asked, "Why don't you make more pictures like this?"[26]

As teachers and parents, we can do something about influencing the kind of films that will be shown in our community. The audience is the final judge on whether a business is serving a public need. The exhibitor knows it. So does the wise producer. And

[25] Schary, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

the American public, with a constantly rising educational level, should and will become less and less easy to please. Here, the question of discrimination enters. This will be discussed in a later section. But it is certain that as we become more discriminating in the kinds of books and newspapers we read, the kinds of radio programs we listen to, and the kinds of television shows we watch, we will also develop, by a kind of affective expansion, an appreciation for better films.

We shall still need films which will carry the story to the poorly educated. One of the great powers of the medium is to transcend many of the barriers to communication with the unsophisticated and the illiterate. But we shall also need motion pictures designed for the highly literate and for the ever growing numbers of informed persons coming out of our high schools and colleges each year. Diversity of pictures is one of the important keys in the future of the industry. But this diversity must also include a recognition of the increasing maturity of the American public.

Many influences are at work on the movies. The competition of television is not the least of these. But unless the public reacts in a way to influence producers and exhibitors, and unless the public works through our schools and community groups to make its opinions felt, Hollywood's answer to television may simply continue to be the development of three-dimension, large-screen projection, and similar technical feats—and a continuance of insignificant themes amplified by these new devices.

Realistically, we cannot expect a sudden maturation of film fare from Hollywood. The sheer weight of the production process, the economic aspects involved, the toll of censorship in many forms, make the motion picture a conservative medium.

Also, new, fresh insights are hard to come by. Motion-picture producers, writers, and directors are only human. They express what they know and try to compromise as best they can with the financial, legal, moral, and artistic censorship which makes it difficult to tell the whole truth in any medium. There are too few film geniuses, and fewer still who are willing to break new ground at a time when new ideas are suspect. Experience with films like *Grapes of Wrath, Home of the Brave, The Fight for Life* and others which try to document the hard realities of our times shows that it often

takes more courage to make social comment on celluloid than it does to do the same in a book or newspaper.

The making of a motion picture, like the development of an idea, is a complicated thing; for example, note the comment of the Senate Investigating Committee Report on the Concentration of Economic Power in the motion-picture industry:

> Any remedy or solution to the problems of the motion-picture industry in its relations with the consuming public will not be a simple one. It is a mistake to assume that any such cure-all as "divorcement of exhibition from production" or "restoration of competition in the production field" or any other single proposal will resolve all the difficulties to all the elements with an interest in this industry. Any single step might well ameliorate the effects of some of the undesirable practices of the industry as they affect the consumer, the exhibitor, or some other interested group. The motion-picture industry exhibits symptoms which are common to many of our great enterprises. Its problems are part of the larger problem of the development and direction of the American industry. More than anything else, perhaps, intelligent and sympathetic study is indicated.[27]

The study indicated above must refer not only to the recurring "investigations" of personal conduct in Hollywood. It must include a serious study of the film "publics," of the potential market for films which fill the needs of special groups. It must take cognizance of the place of the foreign film, of the documentary, of films which interest "minorities" of a few million people. For example, a picture like *The Four Poster* might fail at the drive-in but do a land-office business in the specialized houses.

Such a study will, to be sure, analyze the danger points in Hollywood monopoly and consider carefully the trend toward control by the industry of the images which we see by television as well as on the motion-picture screen. It will assess the values as well as the iniquities of federal, state, and local censorship of films.

Through a study of the industry, we might find the "handles" by which to implement our desire for better films. We might find ways to get the co-operation of the exhibitor and to increase his respect for the community which his theater serves. We might, through our support of competent producers, encourage the production of films with real insight.

[27] Temporary National Economic Committee, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

Even a superficial study of the motion-picture industry shows the value of re-runs of special films. Many good films are slow starters. Some way must be found to get such films featured as film classics. Film festivals, arranged through local film councils, may be effective in bringing to the attention of exhibitor and public alike the value of such pictures. We can teach motion-picture discrimination in our schools, clubs, adult-education programs and in our colleges and universities.

Finally, an intelligent study of the motion-picture industry must include a consideration of the film in the total pattern of mass communication. It must take into account some of the differences between film and press, radio, and other forms of communication described at the beginning of this chapter. It must include a study of the kind of world in which we live and the knowledge that what we "see" in a picture largely depends on how we look at the world and the other people in it.

The motion picture, then, will achieve its true role in mass communication only to the degree it becomes part of, and in turn reflects, our efforts as human beings to be a little more honest, more intelligent, more willing to evaluate our prejudices, fears, and hopes. This is maturity. And with the development of maturity, the role of the motion picture of tomorrow may possibly become what H. G. Wells describes as the role of the novel today:

> It is to be the social mediator, the vehicle of understanding, the instrument of self-examination, the parade of morals and the exchange of manners, the factory of customs and ideas, the criticism of laws and institutions and of social dogmas and ideas. It is to be the home confessional, the initiator of knowledge, the seed of fruitful self-questioning. Let me be very clear here, I do not mean for a moment that the novelist is going to set up as a teacher, as a sort of priest with a pen, who will make men and women believe and do this and that. The novel is not a new sort of pulpit. . . . But the novelist is going to present conduct, devise beautiful conduct, discuss conduct, analyze conduct, suggest conduct, illuminate it through and through.
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> . . . . . .
>
> We are going to write, subject only to our own limitations, about the whole of human life. We are going to deal with political questions and religious questions and social questions. We cannot present people unless we have this free hand, this unrestricted field.
>
> . . . . . .

We are going to write about it all . . . until a thousand pretences and ten thousand impostures shrivel in the cold, clear air of our elucidations. We are going to write of wasted opportunities and latent beauties, until a thousand new ways of living open to men and women.[28]

References

Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCLIV (November, 1947).

This issue is devoted to a consideration of the motion picture from the viewpoint of the producer, the exhibitor, the clergyman, the economist, the sociologist, the educator, the anthropologist, and others, each of whom discusses the medium in a different light. Taken together, these opinions form a useful and interesting composite picture of film as a mass medium.

CHARTERS, W. W. *Motion Pictures and Youth*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1935.

This small book summarizes a series of twelve important studies of the influence of motion pictures upon children made by the Committee on Educational Research of the Payne Fund.

HARDY, FORSYTH (Editor). *Grierson on Documentary*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1947.

John Grierson's writings, as compiled in this book, reflect a new trend, a new kind of thinking about film, dealing with the documentary film but also taking into account such topics as "How Hollywood Looks at Life," "The Course of Realism," and "The Nature of Propaganda." To understand the role of film in our present day, one should read the thoughts of one of the more important motion-picture producers of our time, John Grierson.

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This is a companion work to another report by the same commission on *Freedom of the Press*. The author sketches the social role of the film, examines the provisions of the social role of the film, examines the provisions of the Production Code, and discusses the many pressures—economic, social, and legal—which attend the process of making motion pictures.

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ROSTEN, LEO C. *Hollywood, the Movie Colony, the Movie Makers*. New York. Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1941.

The result of a three-year observation of Hollywood by social scientists, this book deals with the manners and mores of Hollywood. The second half of the work discusses movie producers, actors, directors, and writers. Interesting and useful statistical data are included in the appendix.

ROTHA, PAUL. *The Film 'till Now*. New York: Peter Smith, 1931.

The author, one of the best-known documentary-film producers in the world, in this extensive history of the motion picture both in America and abroad, gives a well-illustrated and carefully documented picture of the film from its beginnings to the date of publication.

[28] H. G. Wells, "The Contemporary Novel," *Atlantic Monthly*, CIX (January, 1912), 6, 19, 11.

SCHARY, DORE. *Case History of a Movie.* New York: Random House, 1950.
This is the story of how a film was made. The film is *The Next Voice You Hear.* The author is executive producer for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. A useful book, written from the point of view of a socially sensitive Hollywood movie-maker of note.

SELDES, GILBERT. *The Great Audience.* New York. Viking Press, 1950.
A well-written, easy-reading book which deals with the mass media and which places the motion picture in its perspective in relation to the radio and press.

CHAPTER V

Freedom of Access to Broadcasting

I. KEITH TYLER

What is the purpose of broadcasting? What functions do radio and television perform for individuals and for society? Only with a clear understanding of the part these media play in present-day life can we appraise their success or failure or take appropriate action with regard to them.

The services broadcasting performs for individuals or groups depends upon their own interests or purposes. If you consider radio and television from the standpoint of a listener or viewer, broadcasting may provide you with (*a*) entertainment, (*b*) information and education, and (*c*) advertising. If you approach broadcasting as an entrepreneur or businessman, it may serve two functions, (*a*) to bring a return on an investment, to earn a profit, and (*b*) to render a service to the public. Finally, if you approach broadcasting from the standpoint of the role it plays in the political order, you are apt to consider its primary function, as has been pointed out in chapter ii, in terms of its relationship to the dominating philosophy of government, i.e., as authoritarian, libertarian, communist, or socially responsible.

Importance of Broadcasting in Contemporary Society

Certainly, as a responsible citizen, you cannot ignore the values of broadcasting. It plays a larger part in the lives of Americans than the other mass media. About 97 per cent of American homes are equipped with radio receiving sets, and a majority of homes have more than one. Furthermore, about two-thirds of American automobiles are radio-equipped. As for television, a similar situation is fast approaching. In so-called "saturated" areas in which television service has been provided for four or more years, the percentage of

homes with television receiving sets is already in the 80's. And with the lifting of the "freeze" on the construction of new television stations, we may expect similar coverage in the remainder of the country in the next five years or so.

As a result of ready access to broadcasting, Americans spend more time exposed to radio and television than they spend in any other voluntary activity. What this does to them and what they can do about it will be considered in later chapters. Every responsible citizen should understand the functions of broadcasting and appreciate its influence in present-day society. Anyone with educational responsibilities should be especially alert to the potentialities of broadcasting for the enrichment of learning experiences.

Indeed, broadcasting plays an important role in most nations and is an important instrument in international policy. In other western nations it functions in a manner somewhat similar to that which prevails in the United States. In Russia and other Communist-controlled countries, it is a vital arm of the state. In the underdeveloped countries of the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America, it is beginning to be used deliberately to inform and instruct the masses of people in the rudiments of health, sanitation, agriculture, home skills, and citizenship.

As an agency for crossing international frontiers, whether this be considered "psychological warfare" or a "campaign of truth," radio has no equal. The United States, with its official "Voice of America" and its private "Radio Free Europe" and "Radio Free Asia," wages only a small part of the war of words. The Soviet Union spends several times as much money and effort on its foreign broadcast propaganda as does the United States. The British, too, have pioneered in international short-wave and have continued to broadcast on a large scale during the cold war. Even the small nations recognize the importance of voicing their particular views and versions of world events, so that the ether is crowded with competing propagandas.

How Broadcasting Serves the Listener-Viewer

The most common motive for turning on the receiving set is to be entertained. Life in the United States is tense and fast-moving, and relaxation is essential. Because of the accessibility of radio and

television, they have become a primary means of release and relief. Moreover, when a set is owned, broadcasting is the cheapest form of diversion. Reading, sports attendance, movie- and theater-going, the corner tavern, and even entertaining friends and neighbors require an immediate outlay of cash. But the receiving set has only to be turned on, and a wide selection of entertainment is at once available.

Most Americans seek entertainment at times because they are lonely. The United States is becoming increasingly a land of urban people, and one notable characteristic of city life is loneliness. Entertainment provided by radio and television provides a sense of companionship and an escape from solitude. Studies of socially maladjusted boys and girls indicate that these youth devote large amounts of time to listening and viewing in a conscious use of these media to "forget my troubles" and to find companionship in the broadcasting activity.

American broadcasting provides a wider range of entertainment than any of the other mass media. It is the common man's theater, his music hall, his vaudeville house, his circus tent, and his medicine show. He can view football, baseball, and basketball, as well as wrestling and boxing. He can travel around the world without moving from his easy chair. And all of this with a minimum of effort on his own part. While he cannot literally have anything he wants when he wants it, he can find a surprising range of offerings available to him because of the competition among four national networks in both radio and television, supplemented by offerings from near-by independent stations.

But this is by no means the whole story. The informative or educational role of broadcasting is both effective and important even though the listener or viewer is interested primarily in entertainment. He depends upon radio or television to keep him up to date on the news. He listens to or views the national political conventions, the presidential inaugurations, the United Nations in session, the proceedings of investigational committees, and the workings of his local traffic court. He garners his political opinions from his favorite commentators and listens to a sampling of campaign oratory. He depends upon broadcasting for weather forecasts and market reports. The farmer receives guidance on when to plant and

spray and how to overcome a variety of crop pests. The housewife gets tips on everything from home decoration and child care to the serving of leftovers. Important audiences follow forums and debates on political and social issues, take "tele-courses" in a variety of academic fields, listen to talks on myriad subjects, learn the workings of community organizations and institutions, and pick up new angles and tips on the pursuit of hobbies and leisure-time activities.

A third function performed by broadcasting is to provide the consumer with information about goods and services and with incentives to desire them. Radio and television have become prime means of selling the stream of products pouring forth from American farms and factories. It is doubtful if the listener-viewer often turns consciously to his receiving set for advertising. Indeed, he is frequently annoyed by its length, its blatancy, and its continual intrusion. Nevertheless, it profoundly affects him. He frequently buys the products that he sees and hears about, and his desires for new goods and services are whetted by the appeals that are made to him.

Advertising has a unique relationship to the medium of broadcasting. In the United States it is the principal means of financial support for commercial radio and television stations, and well over 95 per cent of American stations are commercial. Moreover, this has had a profound influence upon the nature of programs to be found on radio and television stations, as will be shown in chapter ix. Sponsors and the advertising agencies are not only responsible for the sales messages but usually determine the content of the sponsored programs themselves. Seldom do stations or networks try to enlist sponsors for programs they have planned and produced; usually they confine themselves to selling time and facilities for programs offered them by advertising agencies. The broadcaster's role is reduced, typically, to making a selection among offered programs and then ensuring that the chosen program meets his requirements. Since sponsored network programs are made available on a larger number of stations, the programs with the largest following and the largest influence are those furnished by sponsors rather than by the broadcasters themselves. In no other medium does the advertiser exert such a direct influence.

The Function of Broadcasting for the Entrepreneur

From the standpoint of the owner and operator of a broadcast station in the United States, except in the case of noncommercial stations, broadcasting is a business. A radio or television station represents a sizeable investment and is expected to bring a fair return. If the station is owned by a corporation, the management has a financial responsibility to the stockholders to see that the total operation is a profitable one. In this respect, operation of a broadcast station is no different than publishing a newspaper or managing a motion-picture theater.

But whether he likes it or not, the manager of a radio or television station must perform another function. He is licensed to operate on a frequency or channel belonging to the United States, and the condition of his license is that he must operate in the "public convenience, interest, or necessity." Unlike any other medium, the number of broadcast stations is limited by the nature of the medium, and the licensee is a privileged person who has been selected on the basis of evidence that he will serve the public better than the other applicants. He pays nothing for his license and is entitled to exploit it commercially as he sees fit so long as he serves the public adequately thereby.

Thus, the broadcaster has to serve two masters—profit and public service. Much of the time he can serve the two concurrently, but sometimes he must make a choice of one or the other. And the choices he makes affect the nature of the programs offered to the public. If he has a high sense of public responsibility, the station may become not only a source of entertainment but also an important agency of the community, reflecting its problems and resources and providing a means of public enlightenment. If, on the contrary, he is motivated more largely by the desire for quick and easy profits, the station may become only a purveyor of mass entertainment, directed always to the lowest common denominator of taste.

The Federal Communications Commission, the independent agency set up by Congress to issue licenses and regulate broadcasting, has a primary responsibility for seeing that broadcasters perform in the public interest. But since the Commission's staff cannot keep track of more than three thousand radio and television

stations, in addition to many other primary responsibilities, the existing machinery has been severely taxed. As a result, the Commission's influence has largely been exerted through a body of rules and interpretations which have developed through the years as guides to broadcasting practice.

This brings us to the role broadcasting plays in American democracy. And, because broadcasting is a product of the twentieth century, it had to find itself within a society which had already developed concepts of "freedom from government interference," "freedom of the press," and other manifestations of libertarian theory which did not always fit the new medium as it grew in size and complexity. To appreciate broadcasting's present role in our democracy, it is important to view its function as an evolving one, growing out of a body of trial and error, influenced by the currents and eddies of changing opinion, and still far from being completely defined. Furthermore, the citizen, alert to the problems involved, can, in concert with other active citizens, be influential in shaping this role. For broadcasting, by its very nature, requires orderly regulation, and the nature of this regulation is determined by the Congress and the creature of the Congress, the Federal Communications Commission. Both are subject to the mandate of the people—either directly or through public opinion.

The Development of Broadcasting in the United States

Radio, as initially developed by physicists and engineers, was conceived as a means of point-to-point communication, not as "broadcasting." Its uses previous to 1920 were for ship-to-shore contact, for military communication in World War I, and as a means of conveying messages to specific receivers. What little regulation the law provided was administered by the Secretary of Commerce who was empowered to issue licenses to all applicants who qualified. This served mainly to keep track of the wave-length and power of each station and to assure their operation only by American citizens as a protection of national security against foreign intrigue. Few foresaw the development of radio as a medium of mass communication.

Early "broadcasts" were more or less accidental. A lonely engineer played phonograph records to a friend at another station and

was overheard by amateur eavesdroppers who had constructed their own receivers. Similar incidents occurred as the interest of the people in this amazing new invention stimulated the buying of radio parts and the building of simple crystal sets. Soon the radio manufacturers caught on to the new development and began sending out broadcasts of records, news read from the newspaper, and similar impromptu programs, as a means for stimulating the sale of parts and, later, entire receiving sets. And so, almost spontaneously, a mass medium was born.

As the number of receivers increased, the number of transmitting stations also increased. Businesses of all kinds from department stores to insurance companies acquired broadcasting licenses as did churches, labor unions, farm organizations, and schools and colleges. While the sale of time had not yet become a means of support, radio was recognized as a medium of great influence which could be utilized advantageously by its owner. Public opinion on this matter in the early 1920's is indicated by the following statement:

> The emphasis throughout this early period was on the use of radio by commercial companies solely to create public good will. This policy was emphatically approved by the then Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, who said in 1922, "It is inconceivable that we should allow so great a possibility for service, for news, for entertainment, for education, and for vital commercial purposes to be drowned in advertising chatter." The First Annual Radio Conference held that year recommended "that direct advertising in radio broadcast service be absolutely prohibited and that indirect advertising be limited to the announcements of the call letters of the station and of the name of the concern responsible for the matter broadcasted." [1]

Under the prevailing interpretation of libertarian theory, a medium of mass communication—in order to participate in a search for truth—must be kept free from government control. Likewise, as broadcasting began to develop into a profitable business with the support of advertising, it seemed proper, too, to protect it from government interference. Radio as a mass medium seemed destined to follow the pattern of the press: private initiative and competition, unregulated by government. Robinson has noted the joint efforts of

[1] Chester Giraud and Garnet R. Garrison, *Radio and Television: An Introduction*, p. 24. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950.

government and the radio industry to achieve this objective:

> The Secretary of Commerce and Labor, under the broad powers granted to him, attempted to keep abreast of the rapid development which took place in the art of radio broadcasting. He held radio conferences; he assigned frequencies to stations; he refused to grant licenses to those whom he did not consider qualified; and he specified the time during which an individual broadcasting station could operate. It was, however, an era characterized by self-regulation. The leading executives and engineers attended the annual conference in Washington, made suggestions for the rapidly expanding business, which in turn were usually adopted by the Secretary in the form of regulations. This regulatory period prior to the Radio Act of 1927 was marked by a rapproachment between the government and the radio industry. To a large extent the Federal authorities maintained a hands-off attitude and the principle of laissez faire predominated.[2]

But this period of self regulation for broadcasters became an increasing headache for broadcasters and listeners alike. The practice of laissez faire, which had operated so well with the press, did not take into account the peculiar nature of the broadcast medium. The spectrum upon which radio operated was a limited one, and, as the number of stations increased, there became fewer desirable frequencies and increasing problems of interference. Stations, which in the early 1920's were of low power, began to increase their power so as to overcome interference from rival stations, only to have their competitors do the same. Finally, to make the situation even more difficult, the regulation that did exist through the Secretary of Commerce was abruptly terminated by two Federal Court decisions and an opinion by the Attorney General in 1926, which held that the Secretary could not refuse licenses nor specify frequencies or times of operation. The result was a scramble for frequencies and much confusion.

Freedom from government regulation in broadcasting had thus developed a situation from which no one gained anything. It became perfectly clear to broadcasters and listeners alike that government regulation was imperative if the medium was to function with any degree of effectiveness. The libertarian theory, interpreted as freedom from government interferences, had proved itself un-

[2] Thomas Porter Robinson, *Radio Networks and the Federal Government*, p. 50. New York: Columbia University Press, 1943.

workable when applied to broadcasting. It needed to be reinterpreted of it was to be applied to radio.

The Radio Act of 1927 established the basic pattern of regulation under the Interstate Commerce Clause of the Constitution. When this was later challenged, Judge Wilkerson ruled as follows:

> It does not seem to be open to question that radio transmission and reception among the stations are interstate commerce. To be sure, it is a new species of commerce. Nothing visible and tangible is transported. There is not even a wire over which "ideas, wishes, orders, and intelligence" are carried. A device in one state produces energy which reaches every part, however small, of the space affected by its power. Other devices in that space respond to the energy thus transmitted. The joint action of the transmitter owned by one person and the receiver owned by another is essential to the result. But that result is the transmission of intelligence, ideas, and entertainment. It is intercourse, and that intercourse is commerce. . . .[3]

The basic problem before Congress was the kind of broadcasting system that should be created. Should it be government owned, a pattern being adopted in some foreign nations? Should it be completely a private system with the government confined to policing the wave-lengths? Or should it be a system in which private stations become trustees of the public domain, with responsibilities as well as privileges? These were the basic questions faced by the Sixty-seventh Congress.

The Role of Broadcasting as Prescribed by Congress

The Radio Act of 1927 and the subsequent Communications Act of 1934 were strongly influenced by existing libertarian theory. Although complete laissez faire had been proven unworkable, radio was regarded as a new medium for conveying information and points of view to be tested in "the market place of ideas." Hence, it was not to be government owned and operated. In addition, the private operators were to be free from government censorship. Sec. 326 of the Communications Act not only makes this clear but at the same time recognizes the minimum limitations upon freedom in terms of customary morality:

> Nothing in this Act shall be understood or construed to give the

[3] 31 Fed. 2d. 448; Off. 52 F. 2d. 318; Cert. denied 28521. S. 538; 52 Sup. Ct. 311.

Commission the power of censorship over the radio communications or signals transmitted by any radio station, and no regulation or condition shall be promulgated or fixed by the Commission which shall interfere with the right of free speech by means of radio communication. No person within the jurisdiction of the United States shall utter any obscene, indecent, or profane language by means of radio communication.

Thus far radio was to follow in the pattern of the press—private operation, no government censorship, no limitation by a government agency of the right of free speech. But more basic questions remained. Who should own the air, the medium over which the broadcasting takes place? If the ownership lies in the government, then what responsibilities should be laid upon those entrusted with the privilege of using this public domain? How could the concept of the market place of ideas be maintained when the number of possible stations is limited by physical properties inherent in the nature of the medium?

Both the Radio Act and the later Communications Act state unequivocally that all broadcasting channels belong to the government. Sec. 301 of the latter Act states:

It is the purpose of this Act, among other things, to maintain the control of the United States over all the channels of interstate and foreign radio transmission; and to provide for the use of such channels, but not the ownership thereof, by persons for limited periods of time, under licenses granted by Federal authority, and no such license shall be construed to create any right, beyond the terms, conditions, and periods of the license.

From the two basic premises that the number of stations is limited and that a license is a privilege to use a channel belonging to the United States, Congress went on to state the general principle that a station is licensed to serve "the public convenience, interest, or necessity." And the debate leading to the enactment of the law indicates clearly that this public interest takes precedence over any private interests. For example, Congressman (later Senator) White stated:

We have reached the definite conclusion that the right of all our people to enjoy this means of communication can be preserved only by the repudiation of the idea underlying the 1912 law that anyone who will, may transmit and by the assertion in its stead of the doctrine that

the right of the public to be served is superior to the right of any individual to use the ether . . . the recent radio conference met this issue squarely. It recognized that in the present state of scientific development there must be a limitation upon the number of broadcasting stations, and it recommended that licenses should be issued only to those stations whose operation would render a benefit to the public, are necessary in the public interest, or would contribute to the development of the art. This principle was approved by every witness before your committee. We have written it into the bill. If enacted into law, the broadcasting privilege will not be a right of selfishness. It will rest upon an assurance of public interest to be served.[4]

While Congress placed upon each station licensee the responsibility for operation in the public convenience, interest, or necessity, it defined the implications of this order for the handling of broadcasts by candidates for public office. The lawmakers recognized that radio was becoming a powerful medium for affecting public opinion and that it might well be influential in determining the results of elections. They provided, therefore, in the now-famous Sec. 315, for equal opportunity in the use of a broadcast station by all legally qualified candidates for any public office. A station is not required to make its facilities available to any candidate, but, if it does offer opportunity to any candidate, it must afford equal opportunity to all other candidates for the same office. To further safeguard the freedom of speech of candidates, they added that "such licensee shall have no power of censorship over the material broadcast under the provisions of this section."

So much for the basic law governing broadcasting. Stations are granted licenses to serve the public interest by broadcasting on channels belonging to the United States. This public interest overrides private and personal interests. The government regulatory body is precluded from censorship, and all candidates for public office must be treated equally.

Its Role as Developed by the FCC

But the actual establishment in practice of the modified libertarian theory has been a gradual development through the years. Through rule-making procedures and through the adjudication of disputes, the Federal Communications Commission has built up a

[4] Sixty-seventh Congress, *Congressional Record*, 5479, March 12, 1926.

body of rules and principles that govern all broadcast stations. As an independent regulatory body, it legislates within the limitations imposed upon it by Congress and the Constitution. It also acts as a judicial body in choosing among competing applicants for licenses or in deciding disputes involving alleged violations of the law or regulations. It also acts as an administrative body and must, on its own initiative, seek out the facts and hail the parties before it. Its actions are subject to review by the courts.

Running through this body of rules and principles will be found a continuous concern with freedom of expression. As a former chairman of the Commission, Wayne Coy, stated:

> This goal of the widest possible freedom of speech on the air, including the principle of the utmost fairness, is based on the mandate of Congress as expressed in the Communications Act that licensees must operate in the public interest.[5]

This concern with freedom of the air stems, of course, from the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and the eighteenth-century philosophy out of which it grew. But broadcasting is a recent development and was certainly not envisioned by the founding fathers. Only by interpretation can the First Amendment be applied to broadcasting. So far as speech and the press are concerned, this amendment reads: "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press. . . ."

Here the founding fathers were clearly trying to safeguard the individual's right to say what he pleased, but it would be naive, indeed, after the experience of the 1920's to interpret this to mean that Congress, or its creature, the Commission, cannot prevent anyone from owning a broadcast station. As the Supreme Court put it, when the National Broadcasting Company challenged the authority of the Commission to issue the network regulations:

> We come, finally, to an appeal to the First Amendment. The Regulations, even if valid in all other respects, must fail because they abridge, say the appellants, their right of free speech. If that be so, it would follow that every person whose application for a license to operate a station is denied by the Commission is thereby denied his constitutional

[5] Address by Wayne Coy, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission, before the Cleveland Professional Chapter of Sigma Delta Chi, January 28, 1952.

right of free speech. Freedom of utterance is abridged to many who wish to use the limited facilities of radio. Unlike other modes of expression, radio inherently is not available to all. That is its unique characteristic, and that is why, unlike other modes of expression, it is subject to governmental regulation.[6]

Neither can freedom of speech be construed to mean that everyone has the right to speak over radio or television. There is not enough time on all the stations to give all of the nation's millions their chance to be heard. It is simply impossible to apply the freedom-of-speech principle literally to the field of broadcasting.

But the act of broadcasting has been held to be the act of publication. Perhaps, then, we should interpret this amendment in terms of freedom of the press. Indeed this point of view has been put forward vigorously by a former president of the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters who argued that "radio should be as free as the press." Here, again, the essential distinction between publishing and broadcasting makes the parallel inoperative. First of all, the number of possible stations is limited while the number of publishers is not. While economics may limit the number of newspapers, it is still possible for anyone who wants to publish his views to issue a handbill or tract to spread his views as best he can. But there is no parallel opportunity in broadcasting. There is a limited number of broadcasters and each has the responsibility to determine who shall and who shall not be heard.

In the second place, broadcasting is a privilege. It involves using channels belonging to the United States and is extended only to those who pledge themselves to operate in the public convenience, interest, or necessity. No such requirement is binding upon publishers. Therefore, while publishers can print what they like and say what they please through their pages, broadcasters have their personal freedom of expression limited at the point at which this violates the public interest.

How, then, can the First Amendment be interpreted to apply to broadcasting?

Here the basic libertarian theory has become the guide. Democracy is an effective system because the judgments of the many are

[6] National Broadcasting Company v. United States, 319 U.S. 190 (1943).

superior to the decisions of the few. But the functioning of democracy is dependent upon an enlightened citizenry. Such enlightenment takes place only when there is a free flow of ideas and opinion unimpeded by interference either by government or vested interest. Furthermore, the nation's security is assured only when the citizen has access to all conflicting points of view, for, in the market place of ideas, the good will ultimately be chosen.

It is the principle of "unimpeded access" that has been applied to broadcasting. Freedom of speech has become the right of the listener or viewer to have access to all significant ideas and opinions. Broadcasters are to ensure this access through the application of fairness. Only thus will the public interest be served.

Let us examine some of the steps that have been taken in developing this principle of fairness.

In one of the early cases of refusal by the Commission to renew a broadcast license, the precedent was established that a station could not be used for personal attack upon religious, civic, and governmental groups. The station was licensed to the Trinity Methodist Church, South, in Los Angeles, but was actually owned by its minister, the Reverend Robert Shuler. Complaints had been registered with the Commission, at the time of the hearing on the renewal of license, to the effect that Mr. Shuler had on numerous occasions attacked the Catholic Church, the Jews, labor unions, and certain city bureaus. Mr. Shuler's defense was not an offer to prove the truth of these attacks but merely a statement that "these were his sentiments." The station was deleted by the Commission, and this action was upheld in the courts as neither censorship on the part of government nor a denial of free speech.[7]

In another case in which a license renewal was refused, the Commission held that it was not in the public interest to permit a station to operate for the personal advantage of the owner, Dr. John Richard Brinkley. Dr. Brinkley had aroused the ire of the medical associations by making diagnoses over the air, often prescribing one or more of his own patent medicines. It was held that such practices were against the interest of the public health. The court, on appeal,

[7] Trinity Methodist Church, South, v. Federal Radio Commission, 62 F. (2d) 850 (1932); Cert. denied, 284 U.S. 685, 76 L.Ed. 579, 52 S.Ct. 204; 288 U.S. 599, 77 L.Ed. 975, 53 S.Ct. 317.

upheld the Commission.[8] This case indicated that the Commission considered the public interest violated when stations were used in pursuance of private interests without regard to the welfare of the total community.

The Commission went much further in defining the rules of fairness in the Mayflower case. For more than a year a Boston station, before the Commission for license renewal, had broadcast editorials urging the election of various candidates for public office or supporting one side or another of controversial questions. Section 315 was not an issue since it was not the broadcasting of candidates themselves which was questioned but rather so-called editorials supporting a particular candidate or viewpoint. The resulting decision became binding upon all stations.

> Under the American system of broadcasting, it is clear that responsibility for the conduct of a broadcast station must rest initially with the broadcaster. It is equally clear that with the limitations in frequencies inherent in the nature of radio, the public interest can never be served by a dedication of any broadcast facility to the support of his own partisan ends. Radio can serve as an instrument of democracy only when devoted to the communication of information and the exchange of ideas fairly and objectively presented. A truly free radio cannot be used to advocate the causes of the licensee. It cannot be used to support the candidacies of his friends. It cannot be devoted to the support of principles he happens to regard most favorably. In brief, the broadcaster cannot be an advocate.
>
> Freedom of speech on the radio must be broad enough to provide full and equal opportunity for the presentation to the public of all sides of public issues. Indeed, as one licensed to operate in a public domain, the licensee has assumed the obligation of presenting all sides of important public questions, fairly, objectively, and without bias. The public interest—not the private—is paramount. These requirements are inherent in the conception of public interest set up by the Communications Act as the criterion of regulation. . . .[9]

This decision by the Federal Communications Commission stood without challenge in the courts until it was modified on June 1, 1949, after a hearing held on the Commission's own initiative on the issue of "editorializing." The latter decision is dealt with on pages 105-6.

[8] KFKB Broadcasting Association v. Federal Radio Commission, 47 F. (2d) 670 (1931).

[9] Decision and Order, 8 F.C.C. 333, January 16, 1941.

Protection against Monopoly

As the libertarian theory developed, it was, of course, affected by current issues and trends. As industrialization increased in the United States and combines and trusts appeared, these accumulations of economic power appeared to threaten man's freedoms in ways similar to the threats by autocratic government in the past. Trust-busting became popular and monopoly was considered dangerous *per se*. Broadcasting came into being at the time of greatest sensitivity to "bigness" and "monopoly." It was only to be expected, therefore, that the Communications Act would contain provisions to prevent monopoly. Sec. 311, for example, directs the Commission to refuse a station license to any person "which has been finally adjudged guilty by a Federal court of unlawfully monopolizing or attempting unlawfully to monopolize, radio communication . . . or to have been using unfair methods of competition. . . ."

The Commission has, likewise, been sensitive to the dangers of monopoly as this affects radio communication. In the first place, it has limited the power of radio stations. Concerned with the lack of adequate coverage of certain rural areas in the United States, the FCC at one time had granted Station WLW in Cincinnati an experimental license providing for 500 kilowatts power in contrast to other clear-channel stations which had a ceiling of 50 kilowatts. The Cincinnati station enjoyed this advantage for several years, much to the distress of other radio stations in the area. It was alleged that sponsors could buy time on the one station more cheaply than they could buy time on the score or more other stations required to cover the same territory. It was also pointed out that such power constituted a concentrated control over the content of radio communications. When the Commission failed to act promptly on these complaints, the Congress itself took action in the form of a resolution expressing the judgment that power in excess of 50 kilowatts was not in the public interest. The FCC promptly revoked the experimental grant of superpower and reduced the station to 50 kilowatts.

In the late thirties the Federal Communications Commission began a study of the monopoly of radio communication as related both to networks and to local areas. This study revealed that 90 per cent of the nighttime broadcasting power was utilized by stations affili-

ated with only two network companies, the National Broadcasting Company, which operated two networks (the Red and the Blue), and the Columbia Broadcasting System. Independent stations and those affiliated with the Mutual Broadcasting System were characteristically of low power and coverage, even though they represented a considerable percentage of the total number of stations then holding licenses.

The Commission found that the contracts between the networks and their affiliated stations were so exclusive as to bar a station from carrying any network programs except from the affiliated network even though it had the available time and the other network was willing. Furthermore:

> It found that some stations had a contractual right to keep neighboring stations from broadcasting those programs which they rejected, thus depriving listeners in that community of particular network programs. It found that the networks optioned the choice hours of most of its stations, thus handicapping the affiliated stations in the development of programs to serve local community needs. The time under option vastly exceeded the time used by the networks.[10]

The Commission thereupon issued, in May, 1941, new regulations governing chain broadcasting. The practices cited above together with other restraining practices, were banned. The National Broadcasting Company was ordered to divest itself of one of its networks. It was ordered that no one person or company could own more than one station of the same type (AM, FM, or TV) in the same coverage area. The Commission said:

> We believe that these regulations will foster and strengthen network broadcasting by opening up the field to competition. . . . Radio broadcasting is a competitive industry. The Congress has so declared it in the Communications Act of 1934 and has required the fullest measure of competition possible within physical limitations. If the industry cannot go forward on a competitive basis, if the substantial restraints upon competition which we seek to eliminate are indispensible to the industry, then we must frankly conceive that broadcasting is not properly a competitive industry. . . . We believe, however, that competition, given a

[10] "The First Amendment to the Constitution and Public Interest Requirements." Address by Wayne Coy, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission, Amherst College, December 1, 1949.

fair test, will best protect the public interest. That is the American system.[11]

The report of the Commission was appealed to the Courts but was upheld by the Supreme Court and went into effect in 1943.

The rules of the FCC make another provision to prevent a possible monopoly of broadcasting communication. The number of stations of the same type that can be owned by a person or company is limited to no more than five television stations, six FM stations, or seven AM stations.

While monopoly, as so far considered, is economic as well as in terms of the content of communications, the Commission has not been blind to the possible dangers of the latter. Is it in the public interest to permit joint ownership of both radio stations and newspapers? The Commission conducted a hearing on this question in 1941. It was revealed that of some 800 standard broadcast stations, approximately 200 were owned to the extent of 50 per cent or more by newspaper interests, and 48 others were to some extent controlled by newspapers. Even more alarming, from this point of view, was the fact that in 90 communities the sole radio station was controlled by or associated with the only newspaper.

The Commission did not adopt any general rule as a result of this hearing. Indeed, through the years, it has blown hot and cold on the subject. As a general policy, however, when the Commission is considering two competing applications, it gives preference to the nonnewspaper application, other things being equal.

Public Service Responsibilities Defined

In the more than twenty-five years of broadcasting growth up to 1946, the obligations involved in serving the "public interest" had never been defined. The various rules and decisions of the Commission, together with the basic Communications Act, made it clear that, to obtain and continue to hold a broadcast license, the station must operate in the "public interest, convenience, or necessity," and that this involved putting the public's interest ahead of the interest of the licensee, presenting controversial material so as to provide access to important points of view by listeners, using "fairness" in such presentation, and having an over-all well-balanced

[11] As quoted by Wayne Coy, *op. cit.*

service. What constituted a "well-rounded program service" was particularly vague.

In 1929, the old Federal Radio Committee had declared that it should consist of "entertainment, consisting of music of both classical and lighter grades, religion, education, and instruction, important public events, discussion of public questions, weather, market reports, and news and matters of interest to all members of the family."[12] In 1934, the National Association of Broadcasters, in congressional hearings, declared that public service "necessarily includes broadcasting of a considerable proportion of programs devoted to education, religion, labor, agriculture, and similar activities concerned with human betterment."[13] And stations generally have, in practice, recognized the principle stated by William S. Paley, former president of the Columbia Broadcasting System, that time should be made available to recognized public groups. He testified in 1934: "We hold our license by serving the public interest, convenience, and necessity. And only by adequate co-operation with all public spirited groups can we be deemed to perform the conditions of our contract."[14]

Contrary to popular belief, the Federal Communications Commission has never specified a fixed amount or percentage of time to be devoted by stations to programs serving the public interest. Neither has it specified an amount or percentage of time to be devoted to sustaining programs in contrast to commercially sponsored programs. Such suggestions have been made to the Commission through the years both by members of the Congress and by other influential persons, but the Commission has taken the position that individual circumstances vary so widely from station to station that such a fixed requirement would have little meaning. Rather, the Commission has insisted that the performance in the public interest by a station can best be judged by inspecting its over-all programming.

[12] Quoted in *Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees.* Federal Communications Commission Report, March 7, 1946. National Association of Broadcasters Reprint, p. 10.

[13] Hearings on H.R. 8301. Seventy-third Congress, p. 117.

[14] Hearings pursuant to Sec. 307(c). Federal Communications Commission, p. 11151.

Finally, however, on March 7, 1946, the Commission did attempt to indicate more exactly the types of public service performance by stations which would be considered as a basis for renewing licenses. This was the famous "Blue Book," a report by the Federal Communications Commission which was titled: *Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees.*

In this bulletin the Commission stated that there were "four major issues currently involved in the application of the 'public interest' standard to program-service policy; namely, (*a*) the carrying of sustaining programs, (*b*) the carrying of local, live programs, (*c*) the carrying of programs devoted to public discussion, and (*d*) the elimination of commercial advertising excesses."

While the Commission did not attempt to fix any proportion of time to be devoted to sustaining programs, it asserted that such programs have "an integral and irreplaceable part in the American system of broadcasting." Sustaining programs are those for which the station receives no remuneration. Such programs cannot be omitted from a station's offerings or even be seriously reduced in quantity if the station is to serve the public interest. This is because sustaining programs serve five important functions:

1. To secure for the station or network a means by which, in the overall structure of its program service, it can achieve a *balanced* interpretation of public needs.
2. To provide programs which by their very nature may not be sponsored with propriety.
3. To provide programs for significant minority tastes and interests.
4. To provide programs devoted to the needs and purposes of non-profit organizations.
5. To provide a field for experiment in new types of programs, secure from the restrictions that obtain with reference to programs in which the advertiser's interest in selling goods predominates.[15]

"But," said the FCC, "while networks and stations alike have traditionally recognized the importance of the sustaining program as an integral part of the American system of broadcasting, there is evidence to suggest that such programs are disappearing from

[15] Federal Communications Commission, *Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees.* A Report, March 7, 1946. National Association of Broadcasters Reprint, p. 12.

the program service of some stations, especially during the best listening hours." [16]

From the annual reports of stations and networks to the Commission, in which program structures for January, 1945, were analyzed, certain tabulations were made by the Commission. After pointing out certain weaknesses in the data supplied by the stations, the FCC suggested that the following conclusions seemed warranted: First, the larger stations carried a considerably smaller percentage of sustaining programs than the smaller stations, and, second, the proportion of time devoted to sustaining programs during the best listening time from 6:00 to 11:00 P.M. was lower than during other hours. Even more striking was the dearth of network sustaining programs. Examples were cited to indicate "the failure of American broadcasters to provide nation-wide distribution for even outstanding network sustaining programs. . . ." This situation was declared to result from two factors: "first, the failure of the networks to supply sustaining programs in quantity during the best listening hours and, second, the failure of some stations to carry even those network sustaining programs which are offered." [17]

The second factor to be used in judging performance in the public interest was the carrying of local, live programs. Such programs are the means by which stations can provide for local interests, activities, and talent. The Commission pointed out that assurances by an applicant that he will use local talent, deal with civic matters, report local news and market reports, and cover civic and political activities have contributed to favorable decision on many applications. In the *Supplemental Report on Chain Broadcasting,* the Commission noted that it "has been the consistent intention of the Commission to assure that an adequate amount of time during the good listening hours shall be made available to meet the needs of the community in terms of public expression and of local interest." Furthermore, the Commission cites three examples to suggest "that local programming may also be good business policy and may contribute to the popularity of the station." [18]

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

Using January, 1945, as a basis, the "Blue Book" reports all stations averaging 12.7 per cent of their time on the air devoted to local commercial programs and 7.0 per cent of their time given to local sustaining programs. Here, again, during the "good hours" of 6:00 to 11:00 P.M., nonnetwork, nontranscribed programs were considerably rare.

The Commission quotes figures indicating that stations paid $3.30 for salesmen for every $1.00 paid for writers, and that the average station employed less than one-third of a full-time musician and less than one-sixth of a full-time actor. It concludes, with regard to local programming:

> Such figures suggest, particularly at the local-station level, that few stations are staffed adequately to meet their responsibilities in serving the community. A positive responsibility rests upon local stations to make articulate the voice of the community. Unless time is earmarked for such a purpose, unless talent is positively sought and given at least some degree of expert assistance, radio stations have abdicated their local responsibilities and have become mere common carriers of program material piped in from outside the community.[19]

The third factor, suggested in the "Blue Book" as a standard of public interest programming, was the carrying of programs devoted to public discussion. In discussing this element, the Commission noted that there were many complex problems involved and that their solution rested, under the Communications Act, primarily upon the broadcasters themselves. "Probably no other type of problem in the entire broadcasting industry," the report asserts, "is as important, or requires of the broadcaster a greater sense of objectivity, responsibility, and fair play." The Commission is required periodically to review a station's operation, to determine whether it has operated in the public interest. The station's establishment of sound policy with respect to news, information, and the discussion of public issues is a major factor in operation in the public interest, says the report.

The quantity of time which a licensee makes available for the discussion of public issues is an important part of over-all program structure. Because "any vigorous presentation of a point of view will of necessity annoy or offend at least some listeners," there may

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

be a temptation for broadcasters to avoid discussion programs. This, the Commission stated flatly, would "thwart the effectiveness of broadcasting in a democracy." The Commission, therefore, concludes that:

> The public interest clearly requires that an adequate amount of time be made available for the discussion of public issues; and the Commission, in determining whether a station has served the public interest, will take into consideration the amount of time which has been or will be devoted to the discussion of public issues.[20]

The final factor to be used in judging station performance in the public interest was stated in the report to be the "elimination of commercial advertising excesses." While recognizing the value of advertising as the only source of revenue for most American stations and the role it plays in the distribution of goods and services, the Commission notes that this "does not mean that broadcasting should be run solely in the interest of the advertisers rather than that of the listeners. Throughout the history of broadcasting, a limitation on the amount and character of advertising has been one element of 'public interest.' "[21]

The Commission indicated that there has been a steady increase in the amount of time devoted to advertising from the beginning of the regulation, in 1927, to the date of the report, in 1946. Furthermore, a study of the actual practices of stations in Washington, D.C., indicated that the NAB standards (for the amount of advertising time in each program) were "as honored in the breach as in the observance." The Commission further noted certain problems "to stimulate further research," listing (*a*) length of individual commercials, (*b*) number of commercials, (*c*) piling up of commercials, (*d*) time between commercials, (*e*) the middle commercial, (*f*) the patriotic appeal, (*g*) propaganda in commercials, and (*h*) intermixture of program and advertising. This, the Commission states, is not to be taken "as an exhaustive list of advertising excesses." Indeed, "it is not the intention of the Commission to concern itself with advertising excesses other than an excessive ratio of advertising time to program time. . . ."

Presumably, then, this ratio of advertising time to program

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

time is the factor the Federal Communications Commission will consider in judging station performance in the public interest.

In concluding the report, *Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees*, the Commission indicated that it would implement these standards by making certain changes in application forms for new stations and for license renewals, and in annual reports and statistics, so that it can make judgments as to the observance, proposed or past, of these standards by broadcasters as the basis for licensing.

Further Refinements of "Fair Play" in Treatment of Controversy

The principle of "fair play" in the treatment of controversial matters, in order to afford free access to varied points of view on the part of listeners and viewers, has undergone a number of refinements, in the last few years, through cases which have come before the Commission.

In the WHKC case, in 1945, a Columbus, Ohio, station had its renewal application set for a hearing because a CIO Union had protested its inability to buy time to present labor's case on the air. The station defended this practice on the ground that it gave time free for the presentation of controversial matter, and refused to sell time to any party to a dispute, except, of course, for political talks during a campaign. In so doing, the station declared, it was following a provision of the Code of the National Association of Broadcasters which was designed to promote fairness by making it impossible for interests with greater financial resources to have a preponderant influence.

The labor group stated that, on the free time provided the local unit of the United Automobile Workers, their talks were subject to stringent censorship on the part of the station, In addition, since the UAW believed that it could not make its views known through the newspapers, it was in the public interest for time to be provided for the airing of labor views, time for which the UAW was willing to pay. The UAW also attempted to show that the over-all program balance of the station favored industry and business, not only because certain commentators were biased in this direction but also because the commercial programs were sponsored by business and

industry—a sort of tacit endorsement—while labor and professional groups were prohibited from buying time.

In renewing the license at the request of both parties after Station WHKC had promised to afford unions a reasonable opportunity to be heard, the Commission asserted the general policy that licensees had the "affirmative duty" to make provision for the airing of the important viewpoints of those involved in controversy of public importance in the community.[22] This opened the gates to the selling of time to labor organizations.

In the Scott Case, in 1946, the issue was whether a station must give time to a viewpoint generally opposed by an overwhelming majority of listeners, when the station regularly gave time to the contrary, but generally approved, point of view. The petitioner, Robert Harold Scott, was a self-professed atheist. He filed a petition with the FCC, asking for the revocation of the licenses of three California stations because they refused to give him time to discuss atheism while regularly carrying religious programs which attacked atheism.

The Commission denied the petition but issued a general opinion concerning the airing of unpopular viewpoints.

> Every idea does not rise to the dignity of a "public controversy," and every organization, regardless of membership or the seriousness of purposes, is not *per se* entitled to time on the air. But an organization or idea may be projected into the realm of controversy by virtue of being attacked. The holders of a belief should not be denied the right to answer attacks upon them or their belief solely because they are few in number.
>
> The fact that a licensee's duty to make time available for the presentation of opposing views on current controversial issues of public importance may not extend to all possible differences of opinion within the ambit of human contemplation cannot serve as the basis for any rigid policy that time shall be denied for the presentation of views which may have a high degree of unpopularity. The criterion of the public interest in the field of broadcasting clearly precludes a policy of making radio wholly unavailable as a medium for the expression of any view which falls within the scope of the Constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech.[23]

[22] United Broadcasting Company (WHKC), 10 FCC, 515.

[23] *In re Petition of Robert Harold Scott*, Memorandum Opinion and Order, FCC Release No. 96050 (July 19, 1946).

As was suggested previously (p. 94), the Mayflower Decision, which in effect barred all editorializing on the part of broadcast stations, was revised in 1949, after an extended hearing on the Commission's own motion, to permit expression of editorial viewpoints as long as equal opportunity was afforded for reply. It has been argued that the Mayflower Decision prevented stations from engaging in activities aimed at civic betterment and that the station licensee did not have the same freedom to voice his own viewpoints that other representatives had.

In reviewing the whole matter, in its opinion, the Commission stated its philosophy of the right of the public to be informed. Because of the importance of disseminating news and ideas on vital public issues, the Commission has expected licensees to devote a reasonable percentage of their time to such programs.

> And we have recognized, with respect to such programs, the paramount right of the public in a free society to be informed and to have presented to it for acceptance or rejection the different attitudes and viewpoints concerning these vital and often controversial issues which are held by the various groups which make up the community. It is this right of the public to be informed, rather than any right on the part of the government, any broadcast licensee, or any individual member of the public to broadcast his own particular views on any matter, which is the foundation stone of the American system of broadcasting.[24]

Thus the licensee must operate on a basis of over-all fairness, "making his facilities available for the expression of the contrasting views of all the responsible elements in the community on the various issues which arise." He should avoid the assumption that he must insure fair presentation of all sides before allotting time to a controversial matter, however, because, in many instances the "primary 'controversy' will be whether or not the particular problem should be discussed at all; in such circumstances, where the licensee has determined that the subject is of sufficient import to receive broadcast attention, it would obviously not be in the public interest for spokesmen for one of the opposing points of view to be able to exercise a veto power over the entire presentation by refusing to broadcast its position."

[24] *In the Matter of Editorializing by Broadcast Licensees. Report of the Commission.* Federal Communications Commission (June 2, 1949).

Fairness, in such circumstances might require no more than that the licensee make a reasonable effort to secure responsible representation of the particular position and, if it fails in this effort, to continue to make available its facilities to the spokesmen for such position in the event that, after the original programs are broadcast, they then decide to avail themselves of a right to reply to present their contrary opinion.

. . . . . .

But the broadcasters' responsibility goes even further. They have an affirmative duty generally to encourage and implement the broadcast of all sides of controversial public issues over their facilities, over and beyond their obligation to make available on demand opportunities for the expression of opposing views. It is clear that any approximation of fairness in the presentation of any controversy will be difficult if not impossible of achievement unless the licensee plays a conscious and positive role in bringing about balanced presentation of the opposing viewpoints.[25]

With this as a background, the Commission concluded that the presentation of public discussion by a station "may include the identified expression of the licensee's personal viewpoint as part of the more general presentation of views or comments on the various issues, but the opportunity of licensees to present such views . . . may not be utilized to achieve a partisan or one-sided presentation of issues." Stations are free to editorialize, but only if they give equal opportunity for opposing viewpoints.

Reservations for Educational Stations

The most recent development, affecting the public interest in the field of broadcasting, was the action of the Federal Communications Commission in the final television allocation report of April 14, 1952, reserving 242 out of more than 2,000 television channels throughout the United States and possessions for the exclusive use of noncommercial educational television stations. This was a recognition of the fact that the use of broadcasting for educational purposes was of prime importance in the public interest and that the AM radio situation, in which education was largely dependent upon the granting of free time by commercial broadcasters, had not worked out satisfactorily. Because educational institutions require more time to marshall their resources in order to undertake the construction and operation of such stations, the Commission re-

[25] *Ibid.*

served channels for this use. In effect the FCC recognized "the right of access" of viewers to programs of information and education which were not available in sufficient quantity or at convenient times on commercial stations and set aside channels upon which noncommercial educational stations might at a later time be built in order to ensure such programming.

Thus, in the very structure of television in this country, there is a clear recognition of the priority of education in the public welfare. It is too important in broadcasting to be delegated to such free time as commercial licensees may be able and willing to provide. Education is to be given time in which to develop plans for utilizing this most effective tool directly through stations which they own and operate.

The Commission arrived at this decision after extensive hearings in which 76 witnesses appeared, all but five of them supporting the general case of organized education. On the basis of the record, the Commission concluded:

> That there is a need for noncommercial educational television stations; that because educational institutions require more time to prepare for television than commercial interests, a reservation of channels is necessary to insure that such stations come into existence; that such reservations should not be for an excessively long period and should be surveyed from time to time; and that channels in both the VHF and UHF bands should be reserved. . . .[26]

The Commission sees these educational stations not only as making contributions to organized education but also as supplementing commercial programming.

> We conclude that the record shows the desire and ability of education to make a substantial contribution to the use of television. There is much evidence in the record concerning the activities of educational organizations in AM and FM broadcasting. It is true and was to be expected that education has not utilized these media to the full extent that commercial broadcasters have, in terms of number of stations and number of hours of operation. However, it has also been shown that many of the educational institutions which are engaged in aural broadcasting are doing an outstanding job in the presentation of high-quality programming and have been getting excellent public response. And most

[26] Federal Communications Commission, *Sixth Report and Order* (52-294) (*The Final Television Allocation Report*), April 14, 1952, Par. 36.

important in this connection, it is agreed that the potential of television is much greater and more readily apparent than that of aural broadcasting, and that the interest of the educational community in the field is much greater than it was in aural broadcasting. Further, the justification for an educational station should not, in our view, turn simply on account of audience size. The public interest will clearly be served if these stations are used to contribute significantly to the educational process of the nation. The type of programs which have been broadcast by educational organizations, and those which the record indicates can and would be televised by educators, will provide a valuable complement to commercial programming.[27]

The movement to develop, build, and operate these educational stations has been furthered not only by educators but by citizens generally. Like the struggle for free public schools a century ago, the present effort has enlisted men and women from all walks of life who see in educational television a potential for raising the level of citizenship and improving the day-to-day living of both adults and children.

The pattern of support for these stations differs widely from one community to another. In some, one educational institution—a university or a public school system—is to become the licensee with programming support from other institutions and organizations. In other communities, public and private institutions of common school and college level go together to form a nonprofit corporation to operate the station. Taxation is the financial support in some situations; foundations and private philanthropy, in others; while still others will depend upon community fund-raising campaigns and various combinations of sources.

What is to be noted, however, is that the special provision by government for educational television is establishing a new pattern of broadcasting and that citizens have become involved to a degree that is unprecedented. While commercial stations are not relieved of their educational responsibilities by the provision of educational stations, we can expect that the educational function of broadcasting will be greatly increased for the average viewer. Many minority interests and needs, not heretofore met by this mass medium, will be catered to. Serious and informative programming will be available at hours when the greatest number of viewers is available. In

[27] *Ibid.*, Par. 38.

short, education in the home through television will become a reality. Surely this, too, extends the freedom of unimpeded access to information and education which is the heart of the libertarian theory.

Summary

Broadcasting functions to bring consumers entertainment, informative and educational material, and advertising. To the businessman it offers an opportunity for profit and an obligation to serve the public interest. In our society, broadcasting has evolved from a practically unregulated medium to a social instrumentality charged with heavy responsibilities through the privilege of governmental license. The concept of libertarian theory as meaning protection of a medium from the tyranny of government has developed into a concern for protecting listeners and viewers in their right of access to all important points of view, with a government agency made responsible by Congress for ensuring that stations thus operate in the public interest. The rules of fairness, by which stations operate, have evolved gradually from a series of public concerns over monopoly, controversial issues, editorializing, program standards, and finally, educational stations. Certainly the end is not yet. Citizens can play an important role in determining the functions which broadcasting will serve in the future.

SECTION II

HOW MASS COMMUNICATION WORKS

CHAPTER VI

Procedures and Effects of Mass Communication

WILBUR SCHRAMM

The Process

It will be easier to see how mass communication works if we first look at the communication process in general.

Communication comes from the Latin *communis,* common. When we communicate, we are trying to establish a "commonness" with someone. That is, we are trying to share information, an idea, or an attitude. At this moment I am trying to communicate to you the idea that the essence of communication is getting the receiver and the sender "tuned" together for a particular message. At this moment, someone somewhere is excitedly telephoning the fire department that the house is on fire. Somewhere else a young man in a parked automobile is trying to convey the understanding that he is moon-eyed because he loves the young lady beside him. Somewhere else a newspaper is trying to persuade its readers to believe as it does about the Republican Party. All these are forms of communication, and the process in each case is essentially the same.

THE ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

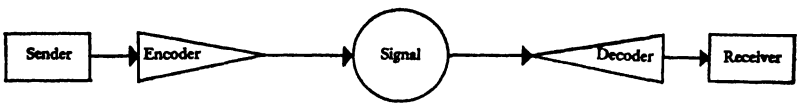
Communication always requires at least three elements—the sender, the message, and the receiver. A *sender* may be an individual (speaking, writing, drawing, gesturing) or a communication organization (like a newspaper, publishing house, television station, or motion-picture studio). The *message* may be in the form of ink on paper, sound waves in the air, impulses in an electric current, a wave of the hand, a flag in the air, or any other signal capable of being interpreted meaningfully. The *receiver* may be an *individual* listening, watching, or reading; or a member of a *group,* such as

a discussion group, a lecture audience, a football crowd, or a mob; or a member of the *mass audience*, such as the reader of a newspaper or a viewer of television.

Now what happens when the sender tries to build up this "commonness" with his intended receiver? First, the sender encodes his message. That is, he takes the information or feeling he wants to share and puts it into a form that can be transmitted. The "pictures in our heads" can't be transmitted until they are coded. When they are coded into spoken words, they can be transmitted easily and effectively, but they can't travel very far unless radio carries them. If they are coded into written words, they go more slowly than spoken words, but they go farther and last longer. Indeed, some messages long outlive their senders—the *Iliad*, for instance; the "Gettysburg Address"; Chartres cathedral.

Once coded and sent, a message is quite free of its sender, and what it does is beyond the power of the sender to change. Every writer feels a sense of helplessness when he finally commits his story or his poem to print; you doubtless feel the same way when you mail an important letter. Will it reach the right person? Will he understand it as you intend him to? Will he respond as you want him to? For, in order to complete the act of communication, the message must be decoded. And there is good reason, as we shall see, for the sender to wonder whether his receiver will really be in tune with him, whether the message will be interpreted without distortion, whether the "picture in the head" of the receiver will bear any resemblance to that in the head of the sender.

We are talking about something very like a radio or telephone circuit. In fact, it is perfectly possible to draw a picture of the human communication system that way:



Substitute "microphone" for encoder, and "earphone" for "decoder," and you are talking about electronic communication. Consider that the "sender" and "encoder" are one person, "decoder" and "receiver" are another, and the signal is language, and you are

talking about human communication.

It is possible by looking at those diagrams to predict how such a system will work. For one thing, the system can be no stronger than its weakest link. In engineering terms, there may be filtering or distortion at any stage. In human terms, if the sender does not have adequate or clear information; if the message is not encoded fully, accurately, and effectively in transmittable signs; if these are not transmitted fast enough and accurately enough, despite interference and competition, to the desired receiver; if the message is not decoded in a pattern that corresponds to the encoding; and, finally, if the receiver is unable to handle the decoded message so as to produce the desired response—then, obviously, the system is working at less than top efficiency. When we realize that *all* these steps must be accomplished with relatively high efficiency if any communication is to be successful, the everyday act of explaining something to a stranger or writing a letter seems a minor miracle.

A system like this will have a maximum capacity for handling information, which depends on the separate capacities of each unit in the chain—for example, the capacity of the channel (how fast can one talk?) or the capacity of the encoder (can your student understand something explained quickly?). If the coding is good (for example, no unnecessary words), the capacity of the channel can be approached, but it can never be exceeded. You can readily see that one of the great skills of communication will lie in knowing how near capacity to operate a channel.

This is partly determined for us by the nature of the language. English, like every other language, has its sequences of words and sounds governed by certain probabilities. If it were organized so that no set of probabilities governed the likelihood that certain words would follow certain other words (for example, that a noun would follow an adjective, or that "States" or "Nations" would follow "United"), then we would have nonsense. As a matter of fact, we can calculate the relative amount of freedom open to us in writing any language. For English, the freedom is about 50 per cent. (Incidentally, this is about the required amount of freedom to enable us to construct interesting crossword puzzles. Shannon has estimated that if we had about 70 per cent of freedom, we could construct three-dimensional crossword puzzles. If we had

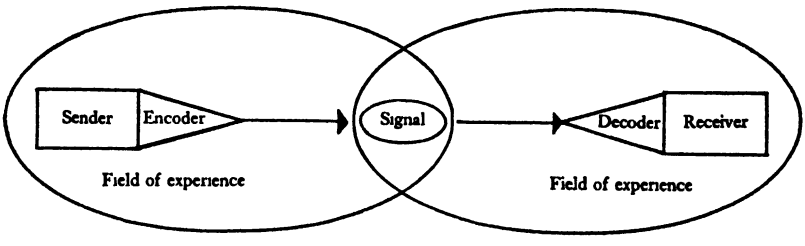
only 20 per cent, crossword puzzle-making would not be worth while).

So much for language *redundancy*, as communication theorists call it, meaning the percentage of the message which is not open to free choice. But there is also the communicator's redundancy. This is an important aspect of constructing a message for, if we think our audience may have a hard time understanding the message, we can deliberately introduce more redundancy; we can repeat (just as the radio operator on a ship may send "SOS" over and over again to make sure it is heard and decoded), or we can give examples and analogies. In other words, we may choose between transmitting more information in a given time, or transmitting less and repeating more in the hope of being better understood. It is often a delicate choice, because too slow a rate will bore an audience, whereas too fast a rate may confuse them.

THE ROLE OF EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNICATION

Perhaps the most important thing about such a system is one we have been talking about all too glibly—the fact that receiver and sender must be in tune. This is clear enough in the case of a radio transmitter and receiver, but somewhat more complicated when it means that a human receiver must be able to understand a human sender.

Let us redraw our diagram in a very simple form, like this:



Think of those circles as the accumulated experience of the two individuals trying to communicate. The sender can encode or the the receiver can decode only in terms of the experience he has had. If we have never learned any Russian, we can neither code nor decode in that language. If an African tribesman has never seen or heard of an airplane, he can only decode the sight of a plane

in terms of whatever experience he has had. The plane may seem to him to be a bird, and the aviator a god borne on wings. If the circles in our diagram have a large area in common, then communication is easy. If the circles do not meet—if there has been no common experience—then communication is impossible. If the circles have only a small area in common—that is, if the experiences of sender and receiver have been strikingly unlike—then it is going to be very difficult to get an intended meaning across from one to the other. This is the difficulty we face when a person who is not trained in science tries to read Einstein or when we try to communicate with another culture much different from our own.

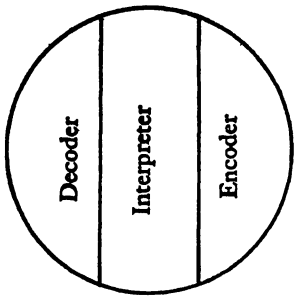
The sender, then, tries to encode in such a way as to make it easy for the receiver to tune in the message—to relate it to parts of his experience which are much like those of the sender. What does he have to work with?

Messages are made up of signs. A sign is a signal that stands for something in experience. The word "dog" is a sign that stands for our generalized experience with dogs. The word would be meaningless to a person who came from a dogless island and had never read of or heard of a dog. But most of us have learned that word by association, just as we learn most signs. Someone called our attention to an animal, and said "dog." When we learned the word, it produced in us much the same response as the object it stood for. That is, when we heard "dog" we could recall the appearance of dogs, their sound, their feel, perhaps their smell. But there is an important difference between the sign and the object: The sign always represents the object at a reduced level of cues. By this we mean simply that the sign will not call forth all the responses that the object itself will call forth. The sign "dog," for example, will probably not call forth in us the same wariness or attention a strange dog might attract if it wandered into our presence.

This is the price we pay for portability in language. We have a sign system that we can use in place of the less portable originals (for example, Margaret Mitchell could recreate the burning of Atlanta in a novel, and a photograph could transport world-wide the appearance of a bursting atomic bomb), but our sign system is merely a kind of shorthand. The coder has to be able to write the shorthand, the decoder to read it. And no two persons have

learned exactly the same system. For example, a person who has known only Arctic Huskies will not have learned exactly the same meaning for the shorthand sign "dog" as will a person who comes from a city where he has known only Pekinese and Pomeranians.

We have come now to a point where we need to tinker a little more with our diagram of the communication process. It is obvious that each person in the communication process is both an encoder and a decoder. He receives and transmits. He must be able to write readable shorthand and to read other peoples' shorthand. Therefore, it is possible to describe either sender or receiver in a human communication system thus:



What happens when a signal comes to you? Remember that it comes in the form of a sign. If you have learned the sign, you have learned certain responses with it. We can call these mediatory responses, because they mediate what happens to the message in your nervous system. These responses are the *meaning* the sign has for you. They are learned from experience, as we said, but they are affected by the state of your organism at the moment. For example, if you are hungry, a picture of a steak may not arouse exactly the same response in you as when you are overfed.

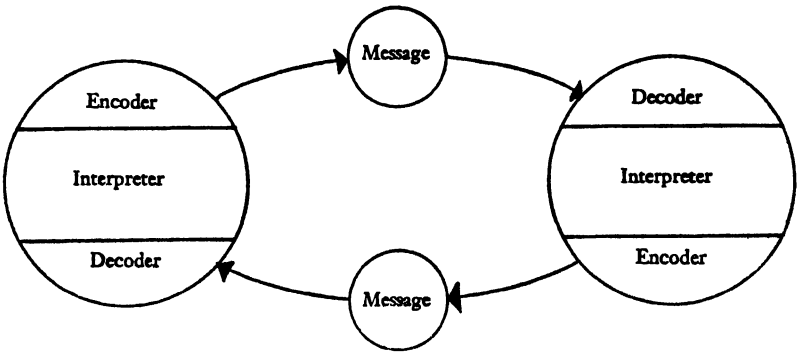
But subject to these effects, the mediatory responses will then determine what you do about the sign, for you have learned other sets of reactions connected to the mediatory responses. A sign that means a certain thing to you will start certain other processes in your nerves and muscles. A sign that means "fire," for example, will certainly trigger off some activity in you. A sign that means you are in danger may start the process in your nerves and muscles that makes you say, "Help!" In other words, the meaning that

results from your decoding of a sign will start you *en*coding. Exactly *what* you encode will depend on your choice of the responses available in the situation and connected with the meaning.

Whether this encoding actually results in some overt communication or action depends partly on the barriers in the way. You may think it better to keep silent. If an action does occur, the nature of the action will depend on the avenues for action available to you and the barriers in your way. The code of your group may not sanction the action you want to take. The meaning of a sign may make you want to hit the person who has said it, but he may be too big, or you may be in the wrong social situation. You may merely ignore him, or "look murder at him," or say something nasty about him to someone else.

Whatever the result of your decoding of a given sign, the process in which you are engaged is one of continuing activity. You are constantly decoding signs from your environment, interpreting these signs, and encoding something as a result. In fact, it is misleading to think of the communication process as starting somewhere and ending somewhere. It is really endless. We are little switchboard centers handling and rerouting the great endless current of communication. We can accurately think of communication as passing through us—changed, to be sure, by our interpretations, our habits, our abilities and capabilities, but the input still being reflected in the output.

We need now to add one more element to our description of the communication process. Consider what happens in a conversation between two people. Each is constantly communicating back to the other, thus:



The return process is called *feedback* and plays an important part in communication because it tells us how our messages are being interpreted. Does the hearer say, "Yes, yes, that's right," as we try to persuade him? Does he nod his head in agreement? Does a puzzled frown appear on his forehead? Does he look away as though he were losing interest? All these are feedback. So is a letter to the editor of a newspaper, protesting an editorial. So is an answer to a letter. So is the applause of a lecturer's audience. An experienced communicator is attentive to feedback and constantly modifies his messages in light of what he observes in or hears from his audience.

This is how communication works, whether it is mass communication, communication in a group, or communication between two individuals.

Determining the Effects of Communication

The chief reason we study this process is to learn something about how it achieves the desired effects. We want to know what a given kind of communication does to people. Given a certain message content, we should like to be able to predict what effect that content will have on its receivers.

Every time we insert an advertisement in a newspaper, put up a sign, explain something to a class, scold a child, write a letter, or put our political candidate on radio or television, we are making a prediction about the effect this communication will have. I am predicting now that what I am writing will help you understand the common, everyday miracle of communication. Perhaps I am wrong. Certainly many political parties have been proved wrong in their predictions about the effects of their candidates' radio speeches. Some advertisements sell goods; others don't. Some class teaching "goes over"; some does not. It is apparent to you, from what you have read so far, that there is no such thing as a simple and easily predictable relationship between message content and effect.

PROVIDING PROPER CONDITIONS FOR COMMUNICATION

Nevertheless, it is possible to describe what might be called the conditions of success in communication—by which we mean the conditions that must be fulfilled if the message is to arouse its in-

tended response. Let us set them down here briefly, and then talk about them:

1) *The message must be so designed and delivered as to gain the attention of the intended receiver.*
2) *The message must employ signs which refer to experience common to both sender and receiver, so as to "get the meaning across."*
3) *The message must arouse personality needs in the receiver and suggest some ways to meet those needs.*
4) *The message must suggest a way to meet those needs which is appropriate to the group situation in which the receiver finds himself at the time when he is moved to make the desired response.*

You can see, by looking at these requirements, why the expert communicator usually begins by finding out as much as he can about his intended receiver and why "know your audience" is the first rule of practical mass communication. For it is important to know the right timing for a message, the kind of language one must use to be understood, the attitudes and values one must appeal to in order to be effective, and the group standards in which the desired action will have to take place. This is relatively easy in face-to-face communication, more difficult in mass communication. In either case, it is necessary.

Let us talk about these four requirements.

1) *The message must be so designed and delivered as to gain the attention of the intended receiver.* This is not so easy as it sounds. For one thing, the message must be made available. There will be no communication if we don't talk loudly enough to be heard, or if our letter is not delivered, or if we smile at the right person when she isn't looking. And even if the message is available, it may not be selected. Each of us has available far more communication than we can possibly accept or decode. We, therefore, scan our environment in much the same way as we scan newspaper headlines or read a table of contents. We choose messages according to our impression of their general characteristics—whether they fit our needs and interests. We choose usually on the basis of an impression we get from one cue in the message, which may be a headline, a name in a radio news story, a picture, a patch of color, or a sound. If that cue does not appeal to us, we may never open our senses to the message.

In different situations, of course, we choose differently among these cues. For example, if you are speaking to me at a time when I am relaxed and idle, or when I am waiting for the kind of message you have (for instance, that my friends have come to take me fishing), then you are more likely to get good attention than if you address me when noise blots out what you say, or when all my attention is given to some competing message, or when I am too sleepy to pay attention, or when I am thinking about something else and have simply "tuned out." (How many times have you finished speaking and realized that your intended receiver had simply not heard a word you said?) The designing of a message for attention, then, involves timing, placing, and equipping it with cues which will appeal to the receiver's interests.

2) *The message must employ signs which refer to experience common to both sender and receiver, in order to "get the meaning across."* We have already talked about this problem of getting the receiver in tune with the sender. Let us add now that as our experience with environment grows, we tend to classify and catalog experience in terms of how it relates to other experience and to our needs and interests. As we grow older that catalog system grows harder and firmer. It tends to reject messages that do not fit its structure, or to distort them so that they do fit. It will reject Einstein, perhaps, because it feels it can't understand him. If an airplane is a completely new experience, but a bird is not, it may, as we have said, interpret the plane as a large, noisy bird. If it is Republican, it will tend to reject Democratic radio speeches or to recall only the parts that can be made into pro-Republican arguments; this is one of the things we have found out about voting behavior. Therefore, in designing a message, we have to be sure not only that we speak the "same language" as the receiver, and that we don't "write over his head," but also that we don't conflict too directly with the way he sees and catalogs the world. There are some circumstances, true, in which it works well to conflict directly, but for the most part these are the circumstances in which our understandings and attitudes are not yet firm or fixed, and they are relatively few and far between. In communicating, as in flying an airplane, the rule is that when a stiff wind is blowing, one doesn't land cross-wind unless he has to.

3) *The message must arouse personality needs in the receiver and suggest some ways to meet those needs.* We take action because of need and toward goals. In certain simple situations, the action response is quite automatic. When our nerves signal "pain-heat-finger" we jerk our fingers back from the hot pan. When our optic nerve signals "red traffic light," we stop the car. In more complicated situations we usually have more freedom of choice, and we choose the action which, in the given situation, will come closest to meeting our needs or goals. The first requisite of an effective message, therefore (as every advertising man knows), is that it relate itself to one of our personality needs—the needs for security, status, belongingness, understanding, freedom from constraint, love, freedom from anxiety, and so forth. It must arouse a drive. It must make the individual feel a need or a tension which he can satisfy by action. Then the message can try to control the resulting action by suggesting what action to take. Thus an advertisement usually tells you to buy, what, and where.

Propaganda to enemy troops usually suggests a specific action, such as surrender, subversion, or malingering. The suggested action, of course, is not always the one taken. If an easier, cheaper, or otherwise more acceptable action leading to the same goal is seen, that will probably be selected instead. For instance, it may be that the receiver is not the kind of person to take vigorous action, even though that seems called for. The person's values may inhibit him from doing what is suggested. Or his group role and membership may control what action he takes, and it is this control we must talk about now.

4) *The message must suggest a way to meet those needs which is appropriate to the group situation in which the receiver finds himself at the time when he is moved to make the desired response.* We live in groups. We get our first education in the primary group of our family. We learn most of our standards and values from groups. We learn roles in groups, because those roles give us the most orderly and satisfying routine of life. We make most of our communication responses in groups. And if communication is going to bring about change in our behavior, the first place we look for approval of this new behavior is to the group.

We are scarcely aware of the great importance our group involvements have for us, or of the loyalties we develop toward our several groups and institutions, until our place in the group or the group itself is threatened. But yet if our groups do not sanction the response we are inclined to make to communication, then we are very unlikely to make it. On the other hand, if our group strongly approves of a certain kind of action, that is the one we are likely to select out of several otherwise even choices.

You can see how this works in practical situations. The Jewish culture does not approve the eating of pork; the Indian culture does not approve the slaughter of cows and the eating of beef. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that even the most eloquent advertisement will persuade an orthodox Jewish family to go contrary to their group sanctions and buy pork; or an orthodox Hindu family, to buy beef. Or, take the very simple communication situation of a young man and a young woman in a parked automobile. The young man communicates the idea that he wants a kiss. There isn't much likelihood of his not gaining attention for that communication, but how the young woman responds will depend on a number of factors, partly individual, partly group. Does she want to be kissed at that moment? Does she want to be kissed by that young man? How about the group customs under which the girl lives? What has she learned from her parents and her friends about these things? Of course, she wouldn't deliberately have a little debate with herself such as we have suggested here, but all these elements, and more, would enter into the decision she makes.

PREDICTING THE EFFECTS OF COMMUNICATION

There are two things we can say with confidence about predicting communication effects. One is that a message is much more likely to succeed if it fits the patterns of understandings, attitudes, values, and goals that a receiver has; or, at least, if it starts with this pattern and tries to reshape it slightly. Communication-research men call this latter process "canalizing," meaning that the sender provides a channel to direct the already existing motives in the receiver. Advertising men and propagandists say it more bluntly; they say that a communicator must "start where the audience is." Teachers know they should start "where the pupils are." You can

see why this is. Our personalities—our patterns of habits, attitudes, drives, values, and so forth—grow very slowly but firmly.

I have elsewhere compared this channeling process to the slow, sure, ponderous growth of a stalagmite on a cave floor. The stalagmite builds up from the calcareous residue of the water dripping on it from the cave roof. Each drop leaves only a tiny residue, and it is very seldom that we can detect the residue of any single drop, or that any single drop will make a fundamental change in the shape or appearance of the stalagmite. Yet, together, all these drops do build the stalagmite, and over the years it changes considerably in size and somewhat in shape. This is the way our environment drips into us, drop by drop, each drop leaving a little residue, each tending to follow the existing pattern.

This personality pattern we are talking about is, of course, an active thing—not passive, like the stalagmite—but still the similarity is there. When we introduce one drop of communication into a person where millions of drops have already fallen and left their residue, we can hardly expect to reshape the personality fundamentally by that one drop. If we are communicating to a child, it is easier, because the situation is not so firmly fixed. If we are communicating in an area where ideas and values are not yet determined—if our drop of communication falls where not many have fallen before—then we may be able to see a change as a result of our communication. But, in general, we must admit that the best thing we can do is to build on what already exists.

If we take advantage of the existing pattern of understanding, drives, and attitudes to gain acceptance for our message, then we may hope to divert the pattern slightly in the direction we want to move it. Let's go back to elections again for an example. It is very hard to change the minds of convinced Republicans or Democrats through communication, or even to get them to listen to the arguments of the opposing party. On the other hand, it is possible to start with a Republican or Democratic viewpoint and slightly modify the existing party viewpoints in one way or another. If this process goes on for long enough, it may even be possible to get confirmed party-men to reverse their voting pattern. This is what the Republicans were trying to do in the 1952 election by stressing "the mess in Washington," "time for a change," "the mistakes in

Korea," and "the threat of communism," and apparently they were successful in getting some ordinarily Democratic votes. But in 1952, as in every campaign, the real objectives of the campaigning were the new voters and the undecided voters.

The second thing we can say with confidence about communication effects is that they are resultants of a number of forces, of which the communicator can really control only one. The sender, that is, can shape his message and can decide when and where to introduce it. But the message is only one of at least four important elements that determine what response occurs. The other three are (*a*) the situation in which the communication is received and in which the response, if any, must occur; (*b*) the personality state of the receiver; and (*c*) his group relationships and standards. This is why it is so dangerous to try to predict exactly what will be the effect of any message except the simplest one in the simplest situation.

Let us take an example. In Korea, in the first year of the war there, I was interviewing a North Korean prisoner of war who had recently surrendered with one of our surrender leaflets on his person. It looked like an open and shut case: the man had picked up the leaflet, thought it over, and decided to surrender. But I was interviewing him anyway, trying to see just how the leaflet had its effect. This is what he told me.

He said that when he picked up the leaflet, it actually made him fight harder. It rather irritated him, and he didn't like the idea of having to surrender. He wasn't exactly a warlike man; he had been a clerk and was quiet and rather slow, but the message actually aroused a lot of aggression in him. Then the situation deteriorated. His division was hit hard and thrown back, and he lost contact with the command post. He had no food, except what he could find in the fields, and little ammunition. What was left of his company was isolated by itself in a rocky valley. Even then, he said, the morale was good, and there was no talk of surrendering. As a matter of fact, he said, the others would have shot him if he had tried to surrender. But then a couple of our planes spotted them, shot up their hideout, and dropped some napalm. When it was over, he found himself alone, a half mile from where he had been, with half his jacket burned off, and no sign of any of his company. A couple

of hours later some of our tanks came along. And only then did the leaflet have an effect. He remembered it had told him to surrender with his hands up, and he did so.

In other words, the communication had no effect (even had an opposite effect from the one intended) so long as the situation, the personality, and the group norms were not favorable. When the situation deteriorated, the group influence was removed and the personality aggression was burned up; then finally the message had an effect. I tell you this story hoping it will teach you what it taught me: that it is dangerous to assume any simple and direct relationship between a message and its effect without knowing all the other elements in the process.

The Nature of Mass Communication

THE ELEMENTS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Now let us look at *mass* communication in the light of what we have already said about communication in general. The process is exactly what we have described, but the elements in the process are not the same.

The chief *sender*, in mass communication, is a communication organization or an institutionalized person. By a communication organization we mean a newspaper, a broadcasting network or station, a film studio, a book- or magazine-publishing house. By an institutionalized person we mean such a person as the editor of a newspaper, who speaks in his editorial columns through the facilities of the institution and with more voice and prestige than he would have if he were speaking without the institution.

The organization works exactly as the individual communicator does. It operates as decoder, interpreter, and encoder. On a newspaper, for example, the input to be decoded flows in through the news wires and the reporters. It is evaluated, checked, amplified where necessary, written into a story, assigned headline and position, printed, distributed. This is the same process as goes on within an individual communicator, but it is carried out by a group of persons rather than by one individual. The quality of organization required to get a group of reporters, editors, and printers working together as a smooth communication unit, decoding, interpreting,

and encoding so that the whole operation and product has an individual quality, is a quite remarkable thing. We have become so accustomed to this performance that we have forgotten how remarkable it is.

Another difference between the communication institution and the individual communicator is that the institution has a very high ratio of output to input. Individuals vary, of course, in their output-input ratios. Persons who are in the business of communicating (preachers or teachers, for example) ordinarily have higher ratios than others, and so do naturally talkative persons who are not professional communicators. Very quiet persons have relatively higher input. But the communication organization is so designed as to be able to encode thousands—sometimes millions—of identical messages at the same time. To carry these, intricate and efficient channels must be provided. There have to be provisions for printing and delivering thousands of newspapers, magazines, or books, for making prints of a film and showing them in hundreds or thousands of theaters, for translating sound waves into electricity and distributing it through wires and through the air to millions of receiving sets.

The *receivers* of mass communication are individuals at the ends of these channels—individuals reading the evening paper, looking through the new magazine, reading the new book, sitting in the motion-picture theater, turning the dial on the radio set. This receiving situation is much different from that which pertains in face-to-face communication, for one thing, because there is very little direct *feedback* from the receivers to the sender. The receiver who, in a face-to-face situation, will nod his head and smile or frown while the sender is speaking, and then encode a reply himself, will very seldom talk back to the radio network or write a letter to the editor.

The kind of feedback that comes to a mass communication organization is a kind of inferential expression—receivers stop buying the publication, or no longer listen to the program, or cease to buy the product advertised. Only in rare instances do these organizations have an opportunity to see, more directly than that, how their messages are going over. That is one reason why mass communication conducts so much audience research, to find out what programs are being listened to, what stories are being read, what advertisements

are attended to. It is one of their few substitutes for the feedback which makes interpersonal communication so relatively easy to plan and control.

The following chapters will have something to say about the audiences of the different media; therefore, we need not discuss them in any detail here. These audiences cluster not only around the newspaper, the magazine, or the television station but also around certain stories in the paper, certain parts of the magazine, certain television or radio programs. For example, Station A will not have the same audience at eight o'clock as it had at seven o'clock, because some of these listeners will have moved to Stations B and C, and some of the listeners from B and C will have moved to A. Newspaper D will not have the same audience on its sports pages as on its society pages, although there will be some overlap. What determines which offering of mass communication will be selected by any given individual? Perhaps the easiest way to put it is to say that choice is determined by the "fraction of selection":

$$\frac{\text{Expectation of Reward}}{\text{Effort Required}}$$

You can increase the value of that fraction either by increasing the numerator or decreasing the denominator, which is to say that an individual is more likely to select a certain communication if it promises him more reward or requires less effort than comparable communications. You can see how this works in your own experience. You are much more likely to read the newspaper or magazine at hand than to walk six blocks to the newsstand to buy a preferred newspaper or magazine. You are more likely to listen to a station which has a loud, clear signal than to one which is faint and fading and requires constant effort from you to hear the program. But if the big game of the week is on that faint station, or if your favorite author is in the magazine at the newsstand, then there is more likelihood that you will make the additional effort.

If you were a member of the underground in occupied France during World War II, you probably risked your life to hear news from the forbidden Allied radio. You aren't likely to stay up until 2:00 A.M. simply to hear a radio program, but if by staying up that

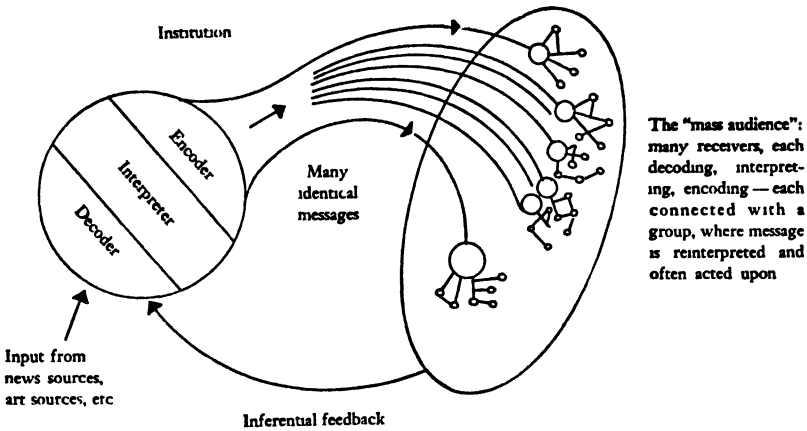
long you can find out how the Normandy invasion is progressing or who has won the presidential election—then you will probably make the extra effort just as most of the rest of us did. It is hardly necessary to point out that no two listeners may have exactly the same fraction of selection. One of them may expect more reward from Milton Berle than will the other. One of them may consider it less effort to walk six blocks to the newsstand than does the other. The significant fact is that the audience of mass communication in any given situation is determined by the way this fraction of selection looks to the interested individuals.

Unlike lecture audiences and small groups, mass communication audiences (with the exception of the people in a motion-picture theater at the same time) have very little contact with each other. People in one house listening to Jack Benny don't know whether anybody in the next house is listening to him or not. A person reading an editorial in the *New York Times* has little group feeling for the other people in this country who read editorials in the *New York Times*. These audiences are individuals, rather than groups. But each individual is connected with a group or groups—his family, his close friends, his occupational or school group—and this is a very important thing to remember about mass communication.

The more we study it, the more we are coming to think that the great effects of mass communication are gained by feeding ideas and information into small groups through individual receivers. In some groups, as you well know, it is a sign of status to be familiar with some part of mass communication (for example, in the teen-age group to hear the currently screamable crooner, or in some business groups to read the *Wall Street Journal*). In many a group, it is a news story from the radio, or an editorial from the *Times*, or an article from the *Tribune*, or an article from one of the big magazines, that furnishes the subject of conversation on a given day. The story, or article, or editorial is then reinterpreted by the group, and the result is encoded in group opinion and perhaps in group action. Thus, it may well be that the chief influence of mass communication on individuals is really a kind of secondary influence, reflected to the group and back again.

We are ready now to draw a diagram of mass communication and to talk about the kind of messages this sort of system requires

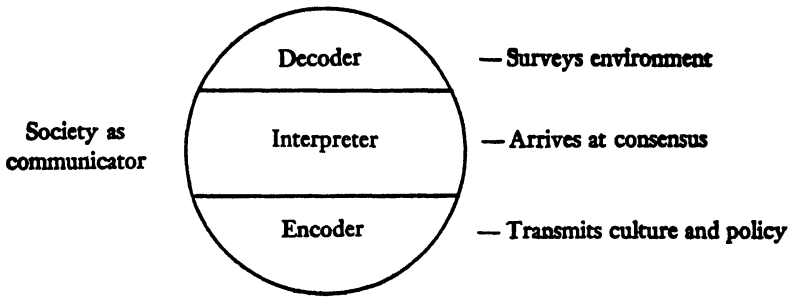
and what we know about predicting their effects. The way mass communication seems to work is illustrated below.



It is easy to see that there will be certain restrictions on the kinds of program which can be carried over these identical circuits to these little-known and changing audiences. The communication organization knows it is dealing with individuals, yet it does not know them as individuals. Its audience-research classifies rather than individualizes the audience. That is, audience-research says that so many people are listening at a given time, that so many men and so many women are likely to read a given kind of article, or that the readers of a given magazine are in the upper economic bracket and have had, on the average, twelve years of schooling. Whereas the individual communicator is dealing with individuals and is able to watch the way his message is received and may modify it, if necessary, the organization is dealing only with averages and classes. It must pitch its reading level somewhere below the estimated average of its audience, in order not to cut off too many of the lower half of the audience. It must choose its content according to the best estimate it can make of what the broadest classes of receivers want and need. Whereas the individual communicator is free to experiment because he can instantly correct any mistake, the organization is loathe to experiment. When it finds an apparently successful formula, it keeps on that way; or it changes the details but not the essentials. If one institution makes a great success with a

given kind of message, others tend to copy it—not because of any lack of originality but because this is one of the few kinds of feedback available from the mass audience. That is why we have so much sameness on the radio, why one successful comic strip tends to be followed by others of the same kind, one successful news or digest magazine by others, one kind of comedy program by others of the same kind, and so forth.

What can we say about the effects of these mass-communication messages? For one thing, mass communication has pervasive effect because in many respects it has taken over the function of *society communicating.* Our society, like any other communication unit, functions as decoder, interpreter, and encoder. It decodes our environment for us, watches the horizon for danger and promise and entertainment. It then operates to interpret what it has decoded, helps us arrive at a consensus so that we can put policy into effect, helps us keep the ordinary interactions of communal life going, as illustrated by the accompanying diagram.



Our society helps us enjoy life. It also encodes—messages to maintain our relations with other societies in the world, and messages to transmit our culture to its new members. Mass communication, which has the power to extend our eyes and ears almost indefinite distances and to multiply our voices and written words as far as we can find listeners or readers, has taken over a large share of the responsibility for this social communication. Newspapers, radio, and television watch the horizon for us. By telling us what our leaders and experts think, by conducting a discussion of public issues, these media, and magazines and films as well, help us interpret what

is seen on the horizon and help us decide what to do about it. The textbook and educational film have led all the other media in encoding our culture so that the young persons coming into our society may learn as quickly and easily as possible the history, standards, roles, and skills they must know in order to be good members of society.

This is not to say that all the media do not contribute in some degree to all these functions. For example, a book like Orwell's *1984* may be as much a report of the horizon as the most current news story. On the other hand, it is certainly true that a great deal of our culture is transmitted currently through television, radio, newspapers, and magazines. But the faster media are better equipped to be watchmen and are more often so used. The slower, longer-lasting media are better equipped to be teaching aids and are so used. The important thing for the teacher to realize is that *all* the mass media have important uses in providing the network of understandings without which the modern large community could not exist.

So much for the basic effect, which we see every day in the customs around us, the people and problems talked about, and the language we speak. This is the slow, imperceptible effect. This is like building the stalagmite. But how about the specific effect of a given message transmitted by mass communication? How can we predict what the effect will be on the mass audience?

We can't predict the effect on the mass audience. We can only predict the effect on individuals. Communication organizations have developed group encoding, but there is only individual decoding. Therefore, we can predict the effect of mass communication only in the way we try to predict the effect of other communication—that is, in terms of the interaction of message, situation, personality, and group. Inasmuch as there are many different combinations of personality, situation, and group in any mass audience, there are likely to be many different kinds of effects. It is equally obvious that, since mass communication doesn't know much about the individuals in its audience, predicting effects is going to be extremely difficult.

Nevertheless, there are certain things to be said. The problem of attention constantly faces mass communication. The average

American probably gives four or five hours a day to mass communication. If he lives in a big city, he gets a paper that would itself take half that time to read. He is offered the equivalent of two weeks of radio and television every day, from which he can choose. He is offered a bewildering array of magazines and books and films. From these, also, he must choose. Other attractive ways to spend leisure compete with communication. He sometimes combines them—listening to music while he reads, playing cards or eating while he hears a newscast, playing with the baby while he watches television.

We can, therefore, predict at least that any individual will have a fairly small chance of selecting any given item in mass communication and that, if he does select it, his level of attention may be rather low. This is responsible for many cases of "mishearing" radio. We know also that readership of the average newspaper story falls off sharply after the first few paragraphs, so that a member of the mass audience is likely not to see at all the latter part of a long newspaper story.

There are, of course, many cases in which markedly high attention is aroused by mass communication and plentiful instances of listeners identifying themselves closely with radio characters and adopting the mannerisms and language of movie heroes. It has been said that the mass media have brought Hollywood, Broadway, and Washington nearer than the next town, and there is a great deal of truth in this. There are, also, some cases in which very spectacular overt results have been accomplished by mass communication.

Let us recall one of them. Can you remember when CBS broadcast Orson Welles' performance of H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*? The script featured the invasion of the United States by armies from outer space. Perhaps you were one of the people who ran screaming for the hills, or armed yourself to wait for the invaders, or tried to call your loved ones long distance for a farewell talk. Or perhaps you were not. Perhaps you were one of those who heard the CBS announcers explain carefully that it was a play made from a book of fiction. Those who didn't hear those announcements were engaged in proving what we have just said about the low level of attention to some parts of mass communication.

But that doesn't entirely explain why people became hysterical and did things they were rather ashamed of the next day. And, in truth, this is one of the really spectacular examples of mass-communication effect. This happened without any specific reference to groups; it happened spontaneously in thousands of homes near the supposed scene of invasion. Why did it happen? Research men have studied the incident and think they have put together the puzzle. For one thing, it was a tense time. People were full of anxiety, which could have been triggered off in many ways. In the second place, people trusted—still trust—radio news; the play was in the form of newscasts and commentaries. Therefore, the communication, as it was interpreted, really represented a spectacular change in the situation: The Martians were invading! Apparently the group element played no large part in this event, but the other three did. The message was accepted (minus the important identification as fiction). The receivers had a good deal of anxiety ready to be used. The message convinced them that the situation had indeed changed for the worse. Each, according to his own personality and situation, then took action.

As we have said, this was, fortunately, one of the few really spectacular examples of mass behavior. Another was the gold rush that resulted when the newspapers, in the 1890's brought word of gold in Alaska. Some people might say that what the Communists have been able to accomplish is a spectacular advertisement for the power of mass communication, and this interpretation is worth considering because it shows us not only some of the differences between the way we use the mass media and the way dictators use them but also some of the principles of communication effect.

One of the first acts of the Communists, when they take over a country, is to seize the mass-communication system. (That was also one of Hitler's first acts.) They also seize the police power and the control of productive resources, and they organize an intricate system of party groups and meetings. I don't know of any case in which the Communists have put the whole burden of convincing people and gaining members on mass communications alone. They always provide a group structure, where a convert can get reinforcement, and meetings, to which a potential convert can be drawn.

They use mass media of communication almost as an adjunct to these groups. In Korea and China, the mass media actually become texts for the groups. And the Communists do one thing more. If at all possible, they secure a monopoly on the mass-communication facilities which reach the people whom they are taking over. When they took Seoul, Korea, in 1950, they confiscated radio receivers wherever they found receivers, despite the fact that they had captured intact Radio Seoul, the most powerful transmitter in that part of Asia. They were willing to give up the use of Radio Seoul, if by so doing they could keep their subjects from listening to foreign radio programs.

A state monopoly on communication, as well as control of resources and organization of a police state, is obviously a long way from our American system. As long as our mass media are permitted free criticism and reporting, and as long as they represent more than one political point of view, we have little to worry about in a political way from them. But even though we may look with revulsion at the Communist way of using mass communication, still we can study it. Let us refer back to the four elements which we said were instrumental in bringing about communication effects —message, situation, personality, and group. The Communists control the messages. By their police power, control of resources (and, hence, of food and pay), they can structure the situation as they see fit. Their group organization is most careful and offers a place—in fact compels a place—for every person. Thus, they control three of the four elements and can use those three to work on the fourth —the personalities of their receivers.

The Communists, who have now had thirty-five years' practice in the intensive use of mass communication for accomplishing specified effects, are apparently unwilling to predict the results of their communication unless they can control three of the four chief elements which enter into the effect.

Let us take one final example. There is a great deal of violence in mass-communication content today. Violence is interesting to children. Yet only a few children actually engage in acts of criminal violence. Most children do no such things. They sample the violent material and decide they would rather play football. Or they attend faithfully to the violent material, use it to clear out

vicariously some of the aggressions they have been building up, and emerge none the worse for the experience. Or they adopt some of the patterns in a mild and inoffensive way when they play cops and robbers. Only a few children learn, from the mass media, techniques of crime and violence which they and their pals actually try out. Now what is it that determines which of those children will be affected harmfully by those messages of violence and which will not?

We can answer this question fairly well from cases we have studied. And the answer is simply that the other three elements—personality, situation, and group influence—will probably determine the use made of the message. If the child is busy with athletics, Scouts, church, or other wholesome activities, he is not likely to feel the need of violent and antisocial actions. On the other hand, if he is bored and frustrated, he may experiment with dangerous excitement. If he has a healthy personality, if he has learned a desirable set of values from his family group, he is less likely to give in to motivation toward violence. On the other hand, if his value standards are less certain, if he has lost some of his sense of belonging and being loved (possibly because of a broken home), he may entertain more hospitably the invitation to violence. If the group he admires has a wholesome set of standards, he is not likely to try an undesirable response, because the group will not reinforce it. On the other hand, if he belongs to a "gang," there is every reason to expect that he will try some of the violence, because in so doing he will win admiration and status in the group. Therefore, what he does will depend on the delicate balancing of these influences at a given time. Certainly no one could predict from merely seeing such a message exactly what the response to it would be. Moreover, it is entirely probable in the case we have mentioned that the community, the home, and the school—because they influence so greatly the other three elements—would have much more to do with the young person's response than would the message itself.

The all-pervasive effect of mass communication, the groundswell of learning that derives from mass communication acting as *society communicating*—this we can be sure of, and over a long period we can identify its results in our lives and beliefs. The more specific

effects, however, we must predict only with caution and never from the message alone without knowing a great deal about the situation, the personality, and the group relationship where the message is to be acted upon.

CHAPTER VII

Procedures and Effects of the Printed Media

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Content and Currency of Printed Materials

How people learn from the printed word what occurs today beyond the reach of their senses is one of the processes unique to man—and vital to man's survival. Since man's success with the printed word depends to such a large extent upon his teachers, this aspect of communication has a critical relation to education. Few activities depend so much, one upon the other, as one's future reading behavior depends upon one's experiences with his teachers in their classrooms.

THE TIME FACTOR IN READING INTEREST

The emphasis in this chapter, then, is upon learning from the printed word what occurs today beyond the reach of your senses. This means finding out from newspaper or magazine what happened between the United States and Russia or the latest decision of your community's government on taxes. This includes the significance of a discovery of a new physical element and the results of a basketball game, the battle of political candidates for votes and the newest recipe for a tasty cooky, the sale of winter clothing at a department store or an advertisement of a house for sale. All of these things, or ideas, occur beyond your immediate experience. You are not there, and yet, through the printed word, you learn about them.

Each of the printed media offers you words which you may use to learn about the world. Each, however, has either a different function or a different emphasis. One way to explain these differences is to classify them by their times of issue, or their currency.

Newspapers are, of course, the most current. We emphasize this by calling them "daily" or "weekly" newspapers. Magazines are

less current, either "weekly" or "monthly," or sometimes quarterly or annually. Comic books are less timely and less tied to a schedule, although you may subscribe to some of them on a monthly basis. Books and pamphlets are least timely. Their knowledge is, however, supposed to have interest to readers over a longer period of time.

With their differences in currency, these media have their limitations as well as their advantages. Since the newspaper emphasizes the day's events, we often say that there is nothing older than yesterday's newspaper. (However, since the newspaper is the record of the day's events, it is one of the basic sources of knowledge for the historian.) Likewise, the magazine of this week replaces last week's issue. Obviously, this is less true for books, pamphlets, and comic books.

THE SELECTIVE QUALITY OF READING MATERIALS

We do not say, therefore, that newspapers and magazines are more important and thus deserve the emphasis they receive in this chapter. The process of how and why people learn from print about today's world is so complex and important that it requires most of our attention.

If you have ever wondered why we have newspapers printed every day, you can find one kind of answer by asking pupils in a class to tell what they remember from today's newspaper. You will find another kind of answer by asking them to tell you what they read in yesterday's newspaper. If your pupils are like most of us, this is what you can expect to find:

First, they *select* only a fraction of the articles, photographs, and other materials in today's newspaper.

Second, they *remember* only part of what they read in yesterday's newspaper.

This is what we call the selection process in the chain of printed communication. It occurs at each step in the chain. Always, there are many more messages available than we select. Always, we forget much of what we have read.

If you will visit a newspaper in your community, you will find the editors have many, many messages which they could print. They will tell you that they simply do not have the space to print all these articles, reports, photographs, cartoons. The editors have to

select only those messages they feel are most interesting or most important to your community. Every newspaper, every magazine, every book publisher has many more messages available than can be printed. The process of communication is *selective* and *competitive.*

Let's start at the beginning of this chain of printed communication and see how these principles operate (see Fig. 1).

You begin with the world of all possible stimuli, all the ideas and things that a reporter might write about. Think of all the things a photographer or a writer might focus on in your community—and doesn't. Each of these individuals, then, will invariably select only a few things to write about or to put into messages (encode) for the newspaper, the magazine, the advertising agency, the book publisher, the comic-book or pamphlet publisher.

To return to your own experience, what are some of the things you have seen today which you thought were interesting enough to talk about to other people? How many things which you saw or ideas which you experienced did you actually talk about? Of the objects within the range of your eyes at this moment, how many do you perceive and what features of each object do you perceive? You and the reporter have a good deal in common. When you talk with other people, you usually refer to ideas or things which you believe will interest them or which you think they ought to know. So it is with the writers, reporters, photographers, editors, and advertising staffs. They select only a few of the many possible stimuli which they then put into messages of words and other kinds of symbols, e.g., cartoons, photographs, etc.

We would miss the "why" of this first step in the selection process if we failed to ask about the general purposes of messages for the printed media. In translating what they perceive into messages, the writers, reporters, etc., have certain purposes. This again is parallel to a man's experience as he watches the face of his wife and decides what next to say to her. He, too, will have purposes which will guide him in deciding *not* to talk to her about the batting averages of the New York Yankees and, instead, to ask her about her new dress.

As the previous authors have noted, the purposes of men in translating messages in writing for these media are, in general, three: To inform, to entertain, to persuade. These purposes have a great

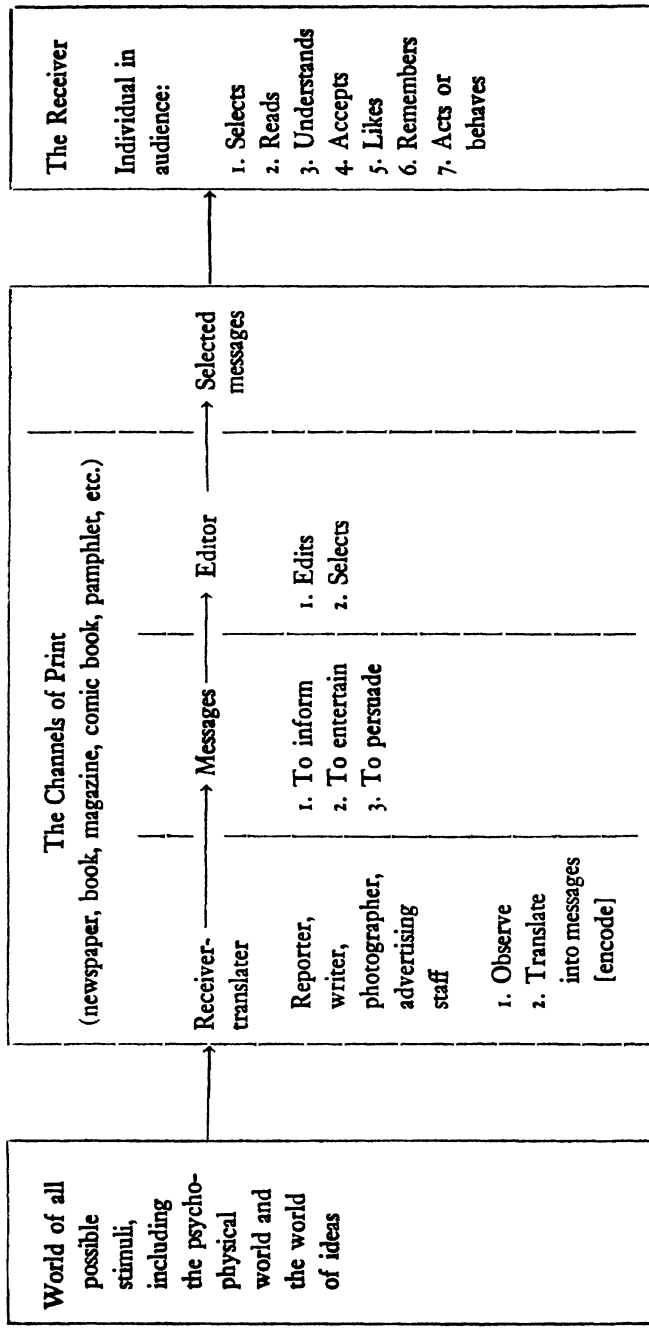

FIG. 1.—The chain of communications by print.

deal to do with how ideas get into print. Writers differ widely in their uses of words, for example, to communicate the same ideas to the same audience. So do editors. So do speakers. So do you differ from your friends, even men of the same profession. The major point of agreement is that the person who writes the message expects people to respond to it in one of several ways.

Hundreds of messages reach the daily newspaper in your community every day, many of which are not printed. Some newspapers, for example, will have batteries of teletype machines copying messages from the Associated Press, United Press, and International News Service. Newsmagazines, such as *Time* and *This Week*, will have messages from correspondents around the world in addition to messages from the press associations. Newspapers and magazines also will have their own staff members writing other messages. Entertainment material, such as comic strips, will be available. Advertisements also will require space. All of these messages, then, are beyond the capacity of a newspaper or a magazine to print. There must be selection. Some, perhaps most, messages must be eliminated. This is the task of an editor, or some such person. He decides which messages are most likely to serve the purposes of informing, entertaining, and persuading. These, then, are the messages which get into print—but the printed messages face an even sterner test of selection, the busy American.

Before a printed message can inform, entertain or persuade, it will have to meet the test of the audience. Its title, or its headline, will have to attract and hold the individual's attention long enough for him to decide he will read the accompanying article, advertisement, cartoon, or photograph. This is a decision which the individual reader makes. It is at this stage that most messages in the printed media are rejected. In general, most people do not read even half of the articles, photographs, comic strips, advertisements, and other material in a newspaper or a magazine.

The act of reading an article is only the beginning. If writers and editors seek to inform, they will seek understanding. If they wish to entertain, they will want the audience to like what the message offers. The advertising man and the editorial writer will want readers to accept, to some extent, the ideas in the advertisement or the editorial. Most editors probably would feel that their articles

had been more successful if they were remembered longer and by more people. Many times the writer expects people to respond through appropriate behavior, to vote, to buy, or to go to a blood bank after they have read his message.

This chain of communication, then, depends upon a series of decisions by different people at different times. If any of them fails, then the chain breaks, e.g., the inducement to go to the blood bank fails to get into print, or it isn't understood, or it doesn't boost us out of our chairs and into a series of actions which will put us finally under the ministrations of the nurse at the blood bank.

The outcomes of these many chains of communication by print go on about us all the time. Printed words do reach individuals and do inform, entertain, and persuade them. To understand this process, we need to ask certain questions, and, for our purposes, we will focus principally upon newspaper and magazine. We need to know about the reporter, the writer, the photographer. How good are they as witnesses? How able are they to give meaning to what they see?

Then, what about the editors and their decisions to print five thousand words and not to print five thousand words? How, for example, do messages compete for space and why is this message selected and that one rejected? What, also, are the limitations of print in newspaper or magazine? And what about the reader? Does he do his best to understand the day's events—or does he circle from comic strip to photograph and back to comic strip? How important, finally, is the teacher to the success of communication by print?

One general point is common to the patterns of behavior which will be described. We shall talk in terms of averages. They apply to hundreds of reporters and editors, thousands of messages, tens of thousands of individuals in various samples of audiences. These are the norms, the averages of what happens most of the time. As you observe patterns of behavior in your school, your class, or your community, you may find sharp differences. New York differs from Thermal, California. John Smith differs from Robert Smith. You may know a reporter whose memory is photographic, whose words carry the exact and most important meaning of an event. You may cite the *New York Times* or your hometown

newspaper as the ideal for what all newspapers should be. You may know an individual who reads all, analyzes with perfect accuracy, evaluates with highest standards, remembers all, and responds always in the public, rather than personal, interest. If you know such persons, they are the exception. The general patterns of behavior apply in terms of what hundreds out of thousands probably will do. Out of fifty thousand individuals twenty-one years and older in an American city, more than 90 per cent probably will see a newspaper today. However, until we know more about John Smith and Robert Smith, such general patterns of behavior do not help us predict that John will read a newspaper and that Robert will not.

The Observing and Reporting Phase of Communication by Print

Of these three functions of newspaper and magazine—to inform, to entertain, to persuade—the informing process seems most germane to the task of teacher and school administrator. If the informing process succeeds, it is assumed that the citizen learns adequate knowledge to aid his decisions about, for example, who shall govern. Little evidence exists to support this assumption, but it will be accepted for this discussion.

How the informing process works at its best and at its poorest can be illustrated by a situation common to many communities. A school system needs new buildings. The superintendent, the principals, and the teachers agree on this need. How do they communicate with citizens so they will vote a bond issue of $2,000,000 for more school buildings?

The superintendent represents the schools. He may use several kinds of communication to reach the citizens (see Fig. 2). He may meet many face to face. He may use direct mail. He may reach others through newspaper, radio, or television. His contact with the newspaper will be with a reporter. Here is the first possibility of failure in the chain of decisions about what information to communicate.

How does the superintendent see his role in giving the reporter access to the information he needs? If lack of some information would be likely to cause the bond issue's defeat, will the super-

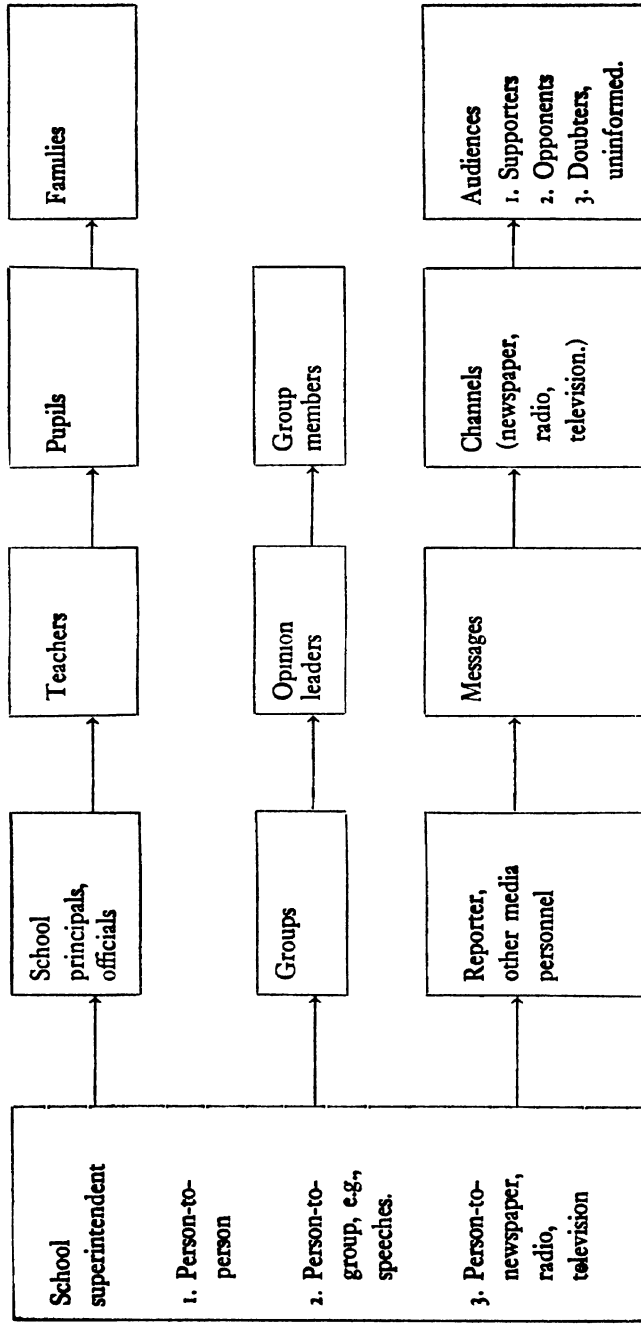

FIG. 2.—How a school superintendent might communicate information about a bond issue to his community.

intendent make that information available to the reporter? If some information is complex and requires understanding of, say, statistics, how will the superintendent make it intelligible and usable to the reporter?

The superintendent seeks, usually, to persuade the citizens and to provide information which will win their support for the bond issue. The reporter tries to obtain answers to questions he expects most citizens will ask about the need for a bond issue.

If the superintendent gives access to all information desired by the reporter, success in the chain of communications hinges upon this individual. The reporter may read information and not understand it. He may not know enough about community and schools to ask the right questions. He may be so limited in the time his newspaper will let him give to the problem that he cannot read or listen long enough to understand the information. The newspaper may not have space for the material. Any of these factors may prevent the superintendent from reaching citizens through the newspaper.

When opponents to the bond issue appear, then the superintendent encounters even more complex problems. The opponents may falsify or distort information about the schools. No court will hold them liable. No limit by law protects schools, reporter, or reader from lie or half-truth, unless statutes of libel, privacy, etc., are violated. The superintendent can only seek to increase his face-to-face communication and the flow of information through the newspaper.

In his face-to-face communication, the superintendent has several alternatives. He may persuade groups of leaders (businessmen, union members, housewives, professional men, etc.) by speeches and personal contacts. He may enlist the support of the newspaper's owner and other executives. If the newspaper decides to support a school bond issue, then it may conduct its own campaign of articles and pictures. By such acts, one superintendent jammed the newspaper with information favorable to the bond issue, and the opposition was silenced.

Figure 2 applies to other communication situations where groups are in conflict over some social issue and seek to reach and influence audiences through newspaper or magazine. For example, in national

politics the candidates of the two political parties have face-to-face communications through party adherents and seek to put favorable information by speeches and staged events into newspapers and magazines. In addition, political candidates often use advertising.

Adequacy and quality of information about a school bond election or other social issue depend upon more than a newspaper's policies or the decisions of its executives and its reporters. In such situations success may depend more upon face-to-face communication than upon communication by newspaper or radio.

For example, in one midwestern city the superintendent first obtained the maximum support of his principals and teachers. He did this by committees, by face-to-face meetings. Next, he talked with leaders of groups in his city. Principals and teachers followed the same tactics. Then the superintendent made speeches at luncheon clubs and other meetings of business and professional men. Each speech was an event and was reflected in the newspaper. He persuaded, first, by face-to-face communication; second, by newspaper.

In general, face-to-face communication is more successful than communication by newspaper or magazine, radio or television. If it were not, we would not need teachers and schools. Communication by newspaper or magazine is more successful when it is reinforced by face-to-face communication.

In your community you will observe that the people, their needs, their values, their attitudes, their language, and the physical environment will influence every decision in the chain of communication. These influences may be lesser or greater, but they will be present, as will be shown in later sections of this chapter.

The Effects of Communication by Print

ENCODING THE MESSAGE

Once the reporter has observed a situation, his task is to put the most knowledge into the fewest words and pictures. He selects from thousands of individual perceptions what he will encode into a message. At a meeting on a school bond issue he will reject such details as the 72-degree room temperature, water spots on the ceiling, a wart on Mrs. O'Henry's cheek, the redness of the chairman's nose. He may reject ten thousand words of speech and debate and

select 150 words which he puts into eight or ten sentences. Most of what he perceives, then, the reporter will reject. How does he decide what to select, what to encode in his message for the editor? How does the editor weigh this message about a school bond meeting and decide to include it in the newspaper or to reject it or to change it? Like the reporter, the editor has more messages than space in his newspaper will allow him to print. He, too, rejects more messages than he selects. What criteria aid his decisions?

Success of decisions about what to encode into messages for newspaper or magazine appears to depend upon these criteria:

1. Whether the message gains attention
2. How successful the message is in communicating the meaning which reporter and editor intended to communicate
3. Whether the message arouses personality needs in individuals
4. Whether the message suggests ways to meet these needs, e.g., ways which the culture sanctions or ways which are within the range of what people are able to do

These criteria suggest other questions: How do newspaper and magazine staffs learn whether messages succeed or fail? How accurate are their estimates of audience interests? Who are the audiences for information, entertainment, and advertising in newspaper and magazine? What are the potential audiences for different kinds of information and entertainment? These topics will be discussed in a succeeding section. First, the nature of these criteria requires discussion since they will set the pattern for an analysis of what is printed and who responds to it in what different ways.

1. *Does the message gain attention?*

Reporter and editor are constricted by time and by space. Each must meet a deadline. After 1 P.M. or 2 P.M., or whatever deadline the newspaper or the magazine sets, the forms are closed and presses soon start. Thinking about a message, searching for more information, trying to improve its effectiveness are limited by time.

Each issue of a newspaper or a magazine has only so much space for all the available messages. Beyond certain limits of space, the issue will be unprofitable. Economic factors of labor, machinery, and newsprint limit space and, consequently, limit the reporter and the editor.

Within time and space limits the reporter and the editor go about their tasks of rejecting most details or most messages and selecting the remainder for print. Their estimates of how many will give attention to a detail or a message generally appear to have much to do with their decisions. The matter of accurate feedback from the audience to editor will be discussed in a later section.

2. *Will the message succeed in communicating the meaning which reporter and editor intended to communicate?*

As in the case of a school superintendent communicating about a school bond issue through a newspaper, many factors will influence the nature of each message. For example, the superintendent may err, may fail to communicate, may select only certain details to communicate. The reporter may lack verbal abilities, knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of audience, interest in the subject matter. The editor may judge that other messages are more interesting and may change wording or reject the message. Whether word and picture are adequate, however, depends upon how they are put to use by reporter and editor. This is their area of competence and responsibility.

A major development in this phase of communications began in education in the 1920's with attempts to estimate the difficulty of textbooks by means of various formulas. This process developed into readability formulas which were popularized by Flesch. Some of the important work in the study of uses of readability formulas and how they relate to comprehension has been done by Dale.

As will be seen, reporter and editor seldom know whether their messages succeed in communicating their intended meaning to their audiences.

3. *Does the message arouse personality needs in individuals?*

One assumes that individuals will select and read only messages which do arouse personality needs. This is another way of saying that people read what they're interested in, that reporter and editor try to estimate what personality needs will be aroused and met by what messages in what kinds of people.

Some needs, such as sex, seem general, and are often served in newspaper and magazine—as in "cheesecake" photographs and detailed messages on sensational divorce trials, etc. Other needs are related specifically to what a person does, such as interest of a cor-

poration executive in manganese—which he may find discussed only in the *Wall Street Journal* or in magazines addressed to a special audience.

Again, how does a reporter or an editor know whether his messages have aroused personality needs in what kinds of people in his audience? Usually he has his personal impressions and little more.

4. *Does the message suggest ways to meet these needs?*

In the case of the school bond issue, the superintendent will seek to persuade voters that the community needs more school buildings and that a bond issue is the way to meet this need. Some magazines find that women respond to messages about how to cook hamburgers, how to make dresses, etc., so that the editors believe women's needs are being met by these messages. Other magazines cater to what they discern as needs for sex and adventure. Newspapers publish messages about weddings and expect that needs for prestige and status are being met. Little is known about how successfully the average message in newspaper or magazine fills any needs of readers.

These four questions suggest, then, that a message will not succeed unless it gains attention, communicates meaning as the sender intended, arouses personality needs, and satisfies such needs. The next section will describe how physical availability influences the responses of audiences to newspaper and magazine messages.

Physical Availability of Reading Materials

People tend to do what is easiest and what they want most to do. This influences to an unknown degree how much one reads and learns from newspaper and magazine. If one has to drive five miles to a post office or if one has to wait several days for a newspaper to be delivered at his farm, he lives in a different environment from a metropolis where he is pelted with invitations to read today's newspaper or this week's magazine. Patterns in a metropolis, a town, and a farm offer enough of a contrast to emphasize the importance of physical availability of newspaper and magazine.

In 1953, one million residents in the Minneapolis–St. Paul metropolitan area had access to ten radio stations, two television stations, four daily newspapers, two Sunday newspapers, dozens of weekly and trade periodicals, all the national magazines, and hundreds of

special-interest magazines. On a weekday any person could have access to several hundreds of thousands of words of news information by listening to the radio newscasts, watching television newscasts, and by paying 20 cents for one copy each of the four dailies.

Only a few cities in the United States under one hundred thousand population have more than a single daily newspaper. Few have more than one or two radio stations. The farther the city is from a metropolis, the less the likelihood that metropolitan newspapers, radio, or television can reach it. National magazines reach the city by mail.

For the rural resident, the same law of distance also operates. The farther he lives from town and metropolis, the less the availability of newspaper, radio, or television to him.

Physical availability of newspaper and magazine will, in general, be greatest in the metropolitan centers and decrease with distance from these large clusters of population. How this may relate to differences in response is not clear. Reading is an intellectual task. The better educated are better readers. Those in metropolitan centers generally have more schooling than those in rural areas. Because of differences in schooling, comparisons between urban and rural behavior need to take this factor into account. It is clear, however, that the two areas will differ in physical availability of the printed media. *Life* magazine, for example, has about 50 per cent more circulation among urban than among rural residents.

How Schooling Relates to What Is Read

If studies of reading audiences have agreed conclusively on any one pattern, it is the increase of the use of print with years of schooling. In general, those who have had more years of schooling read more newspapers and magazines and read more items in these media.

Research also agrees that those with more schooling understand more of what they read and remember longer. This is not surprising, since the teaching of the use of print is one of the major tasks of the teacher. Intelligence tests depend to a large part upon measures of verbal ability, and these are related to reading skills. In brief, learning is an intellectual task, and those with more intellectual ability are better at learning.

Differences in use of newspaper and magazine are more important in their relation to years of schooling than to any other factor. Why is this? If you will take up your copy of a current newspaper or one of the news magazines, you can apply this test yourself. Read thirty or so articles about public affairs, social problems, economic matters, education, health, and like material. Then read another thirty or so articles about crime and corruption, accidents, disasters, sports and recreation, social events, and human interest. The first of these groups of material has been called "delayed-reward" and the second, "immediate-reward" news. What differences do you observe between these two classes of information? Which is more important to the informing of citizens in a democracy? Which is more difficult to understand? Which requires the most knowledge and the best reading skill for comprehension and learning? In general, you will find more difficult vocabulary, for example, in the delayed-reward news and information. (You can test this for yourself by applying the Dale-Chall or Flesch formulas to the material.)

This supports another general finding: The more important and the more complex the information, the more the audience is restricted to those with more years of schooling.

Life magazine offers an example of how great the difference is between those with less and those with more education in the use of a magazine largely illustrated and devoted to current affairs. Findings based upon surveys of samples of the American population show that for every reader with four or fewer years of schooling, *Life* has more readers in the higher educational brackets as follows: (*a*) twice as many readers among those who have finished grade school; (*b*) three times as many readers among those who have had one to three years of high school; (*c*) four times as many readers among those who have finished high school; and (*d*) five times as many readers among those who have had one or more years of college.

Other evidence supports this pattern. College-educated persons read about 50 per cent more of the delayed-reward news than those with a grade-school education. Women with college education read nearly twice as much public affairs news as those with a grade-school education. However, women with grade-school education

read about 50 per cent more comics than women with college education. Those with college and grade-school education differed little, however, in how many news pictures they read. Even for the college-educated, differences in readability of public affairs material appear to relate to differences in amount of reading. In one experiment an "easy" version and a "difficult" version of the same public affairs article were printed in copies of a newspaper distributed to two samples of college students. Those students exposed to the "easy" version read about 85 per cent more paragraphs.

As you would expect from studying the content of the "quality" magazines such as *Harper's* and *Atlantic Monthly*, those with more education are more likely to read such magazines. In general, those with more schooling read more magazines.

Persons with more education also understand more of what they read. One study found that those with more education had higher comprehension scores after reading public affairs articles.

National studies of information on specific questions have shown almost invariably that those with more education had learned more information about current events. Where adults take tests on public affairs information in newspapers and magazines, those with more years of schooling have, in general, much higher information scores.

Consider the circularity of this process, how the years of schooling appear to influence what one reads the rest of the years of his life. Those men and women who have more years of schooling appear to have a greater *appetite* for reading the more significant news, more *ability* to *learn* the more important information, more drive to use the media to *continue* learning about the world they live in. They read more and they learn more about public affairs. They read more of the content of superior quality in books, magazines, and newspapers, content that is easily available but rejected or ignored by most adults. As these individuals with more schooling gain in years, so do they also gain in knowledge from the printed media; so do they become the citizens best fitted to lead, for example, in the formation of opinion on the day's issues.

At the lower end of this circular process are the men and women with the fewest years of schooling. They have much less appetite for significant news, they learn much less of the important

information, they use the media least often to learn more about the world they live in. They read less, and they learn least about public affairs. They read less of the content of superior quality so easily available in books, magazines, and newspapers. They read more comics. They read as many news pictures as those with more schooling. They take in less knowledge from the printed word. Those with the least schooling, then, continue to circle from comic strip to photograph to comic strip. From their last day of school and on through the years of their lives, the gap in knowledge continues to widen between those with the least schooling and those with the most schooling.

Factors Affecting Individual Reading Habits

Whether one has few or many years of schooling, one seems to learn from his teachers much of the need for and the habit of continuing to learn and to grow daily through his discriminating use of the media of communication.

MALE VS. FEMALE

Even after years of schooling, one's sex still has much to do with what one reads in newspapers or magazines. Men differ sharply from women in what they read. Compared with women with grade-school education, men read about one-third more of the public affairs news and about six times as much sports news. Women, however, read as much crime and disaster news as men in this same educational group.

Studies of what men and women read in metropolitan newspapers bear out this general pattern. Of the ten articles most popular among men in a Sunday metropolitan newspaper, six were about sports and the remainder were about public affairs. In the same newspaper, the ten articles most popular with women included nine human-interest items ("Ingrid's Happy," "Wife Will Forgive," "Dionne Quints," etc.) and one about an evangelist.

Wherever the interests of women are involved more directly than those of men, more women will read and learn the information. More women than men read articles with such headlines as "Martha Taft steals show with her wit," "Golden wedding party," "Vets watch hospital wedding," "More polio cases reported," "Fight

opens on milk prices," "Wardrobe tips for winter trip to Bermuda," and "Here's tomorrow's menu."

YOUNG VS. OLD

The content of newspaper and magazine is like a ladder from the comic strip and the picture, for the beginning reader, to the article about devaluation of the pound, for the educated, older reader. The patterns of interest change with school grades. Some of these differences are due, one would expect, to changes in motivation where the school opens the way to new interests. Other differences certainly would be related to improved reading abilities. The research seems conclusive, however, that reading patterns do change by age groups.

The general pattern of change is away from the comic book and toward more important information. The peak of comic-book reading seems to appear in Grade VI and to decline through junior and senior high school. The peak of comic-strip reading occurs from age ten to nineteen years with almost a linear decline to age sixty and older. The change is quite large; it ranges from 74 per cent reading the comics at ages ten to nineteen to 24 per cent at sixty years and older. For these same subjects the age groups did not differ in their attention to news pictures. Subjects ten to nineteen years of age read 45 per cent of the news pictures as compared with subjects sixty and older who read 46 per cent of the news pictures.

For public affairs materials and editorials, the younger readers read only a fraction of what the older readers select. Boys and girls, ages ten to nineteen, read 7 per cent, and men and women, age sixty and older, read 31 per cent of the public affairs news. Subjects ten to nineteen read 5 per cent of the editorials, and those sixty and older read 34 per cent.

OTHER SOCIAL FACTORS

From the comparisons of men and women, you would expect that other factors might influence one's pattern of reading. The work that one does each day appears to be important. Lawyers, doctors, and businessmen will, in general, pay more attention to

public affairs and similar information than skilled workmen or skilled laborers.

Such factors often are combined in social and economic status. Those with more income appear, in general, to buy more magazines and newspapers, but the difference in access to five-cent or fifteen-cent newspapers does not appear crucial. Social and economic status also relates to one's years of schooling. Business and professional men usually have more education. Part of their increased intake of information from print seems related to their daily work and their superior education.

General Reading Patterns

TYPES OF READING MATERIAL

Newspaper reading appears to fall into five classes: public affairs (delayed reward), human interest (immediate reward), comics, illustrations, and advertising. In general, reading of comics, illustrations, and advertising has little to do with reading of public affairs or human-interest material. Heavy readers of comics are not necessarily heavy readers of illustrations or advertising. Whether people read a great deal of advertising has little to do with the attention they give to public affairs or human-interest information.

The content of comics, illustrations, and advertising differ in their subject matter, in the functions they appear to perform, and in the abilities required of readers. In general, comics provide entertainment, and advertising aids selection of goods. Illustrations may inform, entertain, or appear in advertising. These three kinds of material also make little demand upon reading ability. Usually, they are the easiest to read of the five general classes of newspaper content.

Public affairs and human-interest material, however, require higher reading ability. A heavy reader of public affairs is often a heavy reader of human-interest articles. Reading of these two kinds of content is related ($r = .50$-$.60$).

Within each of these five classes of content, those who read two or three advertisements are much more likely to read other advertisements. Those who read several comics are more likely to read other comics. Those who read three or four public affairs articles are most likely to read other public affairs material.

RELATION OF CONTENT TO READING BEHAVIOR

What are the general patterns of reading behavior related to these five classes of content? *The Continuing Study of Newspaper Reading*, a series of readership surveys made under the sponsorship of the Advertising Research Foundation, provides sampling studies of the audience for one issue of each of nearly 150 daily newspapers (1953). Each study is based on personal interviews with 450 adult readers. Analysis of a number of these studies shows the following general patterns:

Comics, illustrations, and human interest are often read by more than half of the readers.

Comics, illustrations, and human interest almost invariably have more readers for more items than public affairs or advertisements.

Most newspapers have fewer comics, illustrations, and human-interest items than public affairs articles or advertisements. For example, many newspapers publish two to four times as many public affairs articles as human-interest items.

Few public affairs articles and few advertisements are read by more than half the readers. About one public affair article in ten may be read by more than 50 per cent of a sample of readers.

Some newspapers are more successful than others in attracting readers to different classes of content. Daily newspapers in small cities, for example, may have more readership of articles about local public affairs but less readership for comic strips than metropolitan dailies.

These patterns illustrate this general rule: Comics, illustrations, and human-interest articles generally gain more attention from adult audiences than public affairs or advertisements. This finding has been tested for applicability to classes of college students. Almost invariably, college students will be better informed about comic strips, illustrations, and human-interest material in a Sunday newspaper than about public affairs or advertisements. The superiority of comic strip, photograph, and human-interest material is usually quite marked. From 70 to 90 per cent of a large college class often will answer correctly a question about *Blondie*, while 5 to 10 per cent will be informed about an event in Washington.

PREDICTING WHO READS AND LEARNS WHAT

The best predictor of man's reading behavior in the future appears to be his behavior in the past. A male college graduate who

is a businessman and who reads today's editorial page and public affairs information is much more likely to read similar material tomorrow. A housewife who left school at the fourth grade may give almost all of her attention to pictures and cartoons and human-interest material in newspaper and magazine.

You may miss the importance of this difference in what two social groups read unless you consider the probable vast differences in what they know, for example, about public affairs and cooking. As the author has noted elsewhere, certain predictions can be made about the amount of knowledge that one hundred male college graduates, 30 to 50 years of age, will have about public affairs. Of all the people one might test, those with the most knowledge would be more likely to appear within this group. Of concern is the great gap one would expect between the knowledge of this group and of housewives who are wives of unskilled laborers and who left school at the fourth grade. On a test about public affairs, such as those prepared by *Time* magazine, one should not be too surprised if large samples of the male, college group had 70 to 80 per cent of the items correct while the housewives had 10 to 20 per cent correct. However, the housewives would quickly overmatch the college males in information about shopping and cooking on a limited budget for a family of five.

This summary of the patterns of reading behavior shows, then, the influence of our habits and our predispositions upon what we select from newspaper and magazine. You are much more likely to read, for example, what you like than what you dislike. You also tend to read and learn views which agree with your views.

Another overwhelming pattern of our reading behavior is that we select only a fraction of what is available in the newspaper or the magazine in our hand. Some studies show that we read one article in seven, others suggest one article in ten. Audiences of small weekly newspapers may read as many as one article in three.

One way to test how much people select is to mark what you read in newspapers and magazines and to ask your friends what they have read in newspapers and magazines. Such results will apply only to these individuals and not to larger populations, such as all adults in a city, etc.

Values of Audiences

Freedom of speech and press is generally recognized as basic in the American democracy. Government cannot decide what a newspaper or a magazine shall print, except by court action. How, then, are limits set on what is printed for information and entertainment? Who sets these limits? Do people, in general and in specific situations, actually favor freedom to print? What do they say about what not to print?

SAMPLING READER OPINION

This question was explored in two ways with a sample of 373 adults in a midwestern city. First, the individuals were asked whether they felt a newspaper should print only what most people agree with (4 per cent felt they should) or whether they should print "all ideas or opinions" (92 per cent concurred). The remaining 4 per cent did not answer. The 373 adults volunteered 1,826 remarks. These were classified and analyzed. They indicated the following expectations toward the newspaper:

> The newspaper should stand "for the public interest" (28 per cent), keep people informed (22 per cent), be "decent" and "in good taste" (15 per cent), print "both sides" (13 per cent), be accurate (9 per cent), be free (9 per cent), easy and interesting to read (2 per cent), and make a profit (2 per cent).

Then the adults were asked whether they thought their newspaper should be allowed to print eleven different kinds of critical comment. The more personal and directly related the comment became to their personal interests, the greater the number who said, "No." The proportions ranged from 13 per cent against criticism of books and movies to 80 per cent opposed to criticism of their religions.

The groups split in many different ways on different issues. Protestants were more hostile to beer advertising, and Catholics were more opposed to news about divorce hearings. CIO and AFL unions were less willing to allow attacks on labor unions but somewhat more favorable to attacks on labor policies of employers. Democrats were less willing than Republicans to permit criticism of the President of the United States (at the time of the interviews the President was a Democrat). Democrats were also less willing than

Republicans to allow criticism of books and movies. On every item, however, those with more education were more willing to allow criticism than those with less education.

When they were asked how they would favor keeping the newspaper from printing whatever they had objected to, only 15 per cent suggested control by federal government or "trial by judge and jury" (4 per cent). The vast majority preferred the influence of public opinion (39 per cent), the "editor's good taste" (32 per cent), stopping their subscription (2 per cent), or did not have any choice (3 per cent). The remainder (5 per cent) had said in each of the eleven instances that they favored allowing the newspaper to criticize.

Audiences set limits on newspaper and magazine by their values and attitudes toward what is printed. These influences may operate at the community level. For example, in 1950 the publisher of a weekly paper at Moose Lake, Minnesota, came into conflict with social and business groups in his community. He received a national award for courage in journalism, but he lost advertising revenue and was forced to sell his newspaper. The patterns of pressure may also be observed at the national level. National groups are organized to present their attitudes to the mass media. This feedback of information from audiences is expected. How does it influence what we read?

FEEDBACK—AUDIENCE TO EDITOR

Editors need some estimate of how audiences respond to content of newspaper or magazine. How do they obtain this estimate? What are limitations and advantages of feedback of various kinds from audience to editor?

Interested individuals and groups are, of course, the first to respond. Since these groups are vocal and their members often influential, their feedback flows daily into newspaper and magazine. These range, for example, from parents' groups protesting against material they believe borders on the pornographic to a manufacturer objecting to an unkind reference to his product. The borderline lunatic and the crackpot add their voices to this daily barrage.

The dangers of this kind of feedback are obvious. Pressure groups represent their interests. Their protests often lack any evi-

dence to support their claims. They may give newspaper or magazine a quite erroneous impression of an audience's response, the influence of groups, or public opinion.

In practice, several checks on these dangers are used. First are the hundreds of daily contacts by a newspaper's personnel with citizens in a community. These contacts range from those of the publisher to those of carrier boys.

A second check is the sampling study of what people read. This type of study is used quite often by national magazines and occasionally by daily newspapers. This is called the readership study. It tells the editor how many read each item.

The uses and dangers of readership-sampling studies have been treated by a magazine editor, Ben Hibbs of the *Saturday Evening Post*. His magazine audience is surveyed 24 times a year. He made radical changes in the magazine when he became editor. His mail indicated 85 per cent against and 15 per cent for the changes. National surveys showed 20 per cent against, 5 per cent neutral, and 75 per cent for the changes.

Hibbs is aware, however, of the shortcomings of popularity as a simple measure of success of newspaper or magazine. He has said:

> For example, if our only objective were to achieve the highest readership figure on every feature in the magazine, we would probably fill our article space with Hollywood personalities, sports pieces, articles on mountain climbing and other adventurous experiences, biographical sketches of eccentric and colorful people, and so on—to the exclusion of more serious articles on national and world affairs.

Another danger of sampling surveys is the failure in the usual analysis to show who is interested how much in what content. One magazine drops any continuing feature which does not attract at least 25 per cent of its audiences. Its editors do not take into account the intensity of interest in material or the kinds of people who are interested. One newspaper editor noticed that crossword puzzles seldom were read by more than 6 to 9 per cent of his audience. He held out the crossword puzzles one day. His switchboard was jammed. Those who followed crossword puzzles were intensely interested.

In a similar instance, a metropolitan editor noted that his favorite comic strip, "Pogo," had the smallest audience of any of the comic

strips in his newspaper. He dropped "Pogo." He had dozens of letters and petitions from college students and professors. One petition included two hundred students. A letter was signed by most of the professors in a famous university's department of psychology. The editor said, "We can't afford to run a comic strip for college students and college professors."

A third kind of effort to get feedback from audiences has been used in a few instances. This is a continuing panel of group leaders who meet with newspaper or magazine personnel.

Some newspapers and magazines use combinations of all of these methods. The Des Moines *Register* and *Tribune* and the Minneapolis *Star* and *Tribune* are notable examples among newspapers. They have systematic studies of reader behavior and attitudes. They sponsor basic research on communication problems in universities. They conduct continuing analyses of public opinion, the "Iowa Poll" and the "Minnesota Poll." Among magazines, the Curtis Publishing Company was first to begin sampling studies of its audience. Each of the magazines in this group undergoes examination to see how its effectiveness can be increased. One research section is devoted solely to developing and improving information, entertainment, and advertising functions of the magazines.

Increasing use of sampling surveys and experimental research is one of the major changes in newspaper and magazine practices in the last quarter-century. The potentials of these and other methods will be used more and more if they demonstrate their utility in increased accuracy of feeding back information, audience to editor.

What Is the Teacher's Task?

If any one class of citizen can stimulate an increasing demand for and recognition of quality in the performance of the media, this class is the teacher. If the gap in daily learning of significant knowledge from the media between those with more and those with less schooling is narrowed, the teacher will have some hand in this miracle. What, realistically, could the individual teacher be expected to achieve with his students in relation to the printed media?

First, the student should read and listen to the *best* of his ability. This means that meeting a minimum standard is never enough in this age of atom, electron, and antibiotic.

Second, the student should *want* to continue his pursuit of knowledge beyond the last day of school and into the apparent jungle of the media. It is from the teacher that the student will learn how to find his way through the jungle of the media, past the comic and sports pages to the interpretative article and the news story on how the United States government will be financed for the next year. The student will have to want to learn, and he will need the beginning boost from the teacher into this continuing habit of everyday growth through discriminating use of the media.

Third, the student will need to learn how to allot his time to the media, how to select with discrimination, how to search through the many sources for answers to his particular questions. This means the teacher will have to study the reading, viewing, and listening habits of his students and work out the best solutions for his students in his school and in his community.

Finally, there is the teacher's obligation as citizen-reader-looker—one of the really informed persons in the community. The teacher needs to learn from the media about the public affairs of his community—local, state, and national. In addition, there is the increasing use of the newer media, radio and television, in the schools and the growing custom for teachers to produce more and more textual materials which are gaining wider and wider use in the media. This points to a growing professional habit among teachers of the use of the mass media to aid learning.

Suppose that the ideals of these responsibilities are achieved by student and teacher and that this is multiplied by the hundreds of thousands. What then? One would at least expect an increase in demand for quality in the media and a greater recognition and use of the superior quality which already exists in American newspapers, magazines, and books. Indeed, one of the major factors in the future quality of the American printed media lies within the complex of who learns what how well from which teachers—and then goes on to read more widely and with more understanding.

CHAPTER VIII

Social Impact of the Mass Media of Communication

FRANKLIN FEARING

It appears impossible to be involved with the mass media of communication at any level—as technicians, producers, educators, social scientists, writers, directors, parents, or even as men of good will—without becoming concerned with the problems of social impact. It is inevitable that we ask the question: What does this communication do *to* people? Or, perhaps the more meaningful question: What does it do *for* people? The answers will depend upon the level of sophistication, the insights, and perhaps the urgency of the questioner's need. It is clear that many persons, some of whom are highly intelligent, have deep-seated convictions about these matters. Viewed from their vantage point, the content of the mass media seem to be trivial, or vulgar, or vicious, or worse. In these terms it is easy to understand their alarm regarding "effects." This concern has manifested itself in popular and semipopular articles and books, in proposals for various types of restriction to be imposed on producers of films, radio, TV, or comic strips. It has even been responsible for some of the systematic research programs concerned with "effects." [1]

[1] A vocal exponent of the view that the effects of the content of the mass media are bad, especially on children, is the psychiatrist, Frederic Wertham. The particular targets of his attack are the comics, which he finds filled with brutality, cruelty, and violence. In a number of semipopular articles [examples of which are "The Comics—Very Funny!" *Saturday Review of Literature* (May 29, 1948), and "What Your Children Think of You," *This Week* (October 10, 1948)], he finds that such content directly stimulates children to various kinds of antisocial acts. This monistic conception of the causation of delinquency is critically and devastatingly examined by Frederic M. Thrasher ("Comics and Delinquency: Cause or Scapegoat?"), Henry E. Schultz ("Censorship or Self-Regulation?"), and others in the December, 1949, issue of the *Journal of Educational Sociology*.

Some Definitions and Examples

Initially it seems desirable to make clear what is meant by the term *mass communications.* A mass communication is any communication produced at a single source which is capable of being transmitted to an infinitely large audience. In the course of history, man has evolved various technologies which, within limits, made this kind of communication possible. It is only very recently, however, that transmitting technologies have been developed which make it possible for sound and visual images emanating from a single source to reach an infinitely large number of possible interpreters *simultaneously or nearly simultaneously.*

We are not here concerned with these technologies, as such, but with some of the outcomes of their use in contemporary society. For these outcomes, the term *effects* is at once too narrow or too specific. The term *impact* is more appropriate, since it may include what these communication technologies do *for* people as well as what they do *to* people. And, as will be apparent when we consider a general psychological theory of human communication, the term *impact* must also include what happens to those who produce such communications as well as to those who are exposed to them.

The problems which concern the educator, the social scientist, and people of good will generally in this field stem from the use of transmission technologies which have the characteristics indicated in the above definitions. It is easy to see, for example, how communications emanating from a *single source*, potentially capable of reaching a vast audience, introduce the problem of social control. A single agency, a single individual in the limiting case, may determine the content of a communication which may reach millions of persons. The shift from multiple-source communications to single-source communications, made possible by the development of special technologies of transmission, places a powerful instrument in the hands of a small number of persons. The term *powerful* in this context is meaningful only when certain assumptions about the extent and character of the impact are made.

Certainly whatever potentialities the content of a communication possesses for the modification of human attitudes and opinion, or for the changing of human action, these become enormously magnified when a single communication reaches a vast audience. The political

and social symbols of a society, the images of its leaders, its angels and its demons, and the patterns of its mythology may be transmitted to millions of persons simultaneously, not neutrally and impartially as we like to assert, but always in a directed context. The television equipment transmits the sound and visual images of a political figure delivering a speech, and, while the sound of the speaker's voice is still being transmitted, the camera focusses on a sleeping member of the audience or on the rows of empty seats at the back of the auditorium.

It will be useful to recount some instances that illustrate not only the complex character and social ramifications of the impact of a communication situation possessing the characteristics we have described but also the potency of the social forces which it may release.

Incident 1. On October 30, 1938, there was a broadcast on a national radio network a dramatic script entitled, *War of the Worlds*, based on the well-known story by H. G. Wells in which the fictional invasion of men from Mars is depicted. The dramatic format used in the radio version was that of a news flash which interrupts a musical program to announce the "landing" of the Martians in New Jersey. There followed a series of "flashes" which interrupted the concert with increasing frequency until it was displaced by what appeared to be an on-the-spot account of a terrible catastrophe. Hadley Cantril, who studied the effects of this broadcast, describes what happened:

> Long before the broadcast had ended, people all over the United States were praying, crying, fleeing frantically to escape death from the Martians. Some ran to rescue loved ones. Others telephoned farewells or warnings, hurried to inform neighbors, sought information from newspapers or radio stations, summoned ambulances and police cars. At least six million people heard the broadcast. At least a million of them were frightened or disturbed.[2]

Incident 2. In the radio program, *Truth or Consequences*, participants from the studio audience are asked certain questions. If the answers are incorrect, they are required to pay a forfeit which takes the form of requiring the victim to do something which makes

[2] Hadley Cantril, *The Invasion from Mars*, p. 620. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1940.

him appear comic or ridiculous. On the evening of January 23, 1943, it had been brought out that the lady who had incorrectly answered her questions was the mother of a nineteen-year-old boy who had recently enlisted in the United States Marines. Instead of the usual type of forfeit, the master of ceremonies called on each member of the listening audience to put a penny in an envelope and mail it to the mother, who was instructed to buy bonds with the money in the name of her son. One hundred and twelve sacks of mail containing 204,200 letters were delivered by harassed postal officials to the mother in a few days. The letters contained 300,157 pennies and money in much larger denominations. The letters came from all the states in the United States, as well as from Canada, Mexico, the West Indies, and even England and North Africa.[3]

Incident 3. On September 21, 1943, during a span of eighteen hours, a radio star named Kate Smith spoke for a minute or two on sixty-five separate occasions asking her listeners to buy war bonds. In the words of Merton, who studied this event and its results, "she invoked themes of love and hate, of large hopes and desperate fears, of honor and shame. Apparently there was nothing of a cut-and-dried radio script. It was presented as a personal message, iterated and reiterated in a voice often broken, it seemed, by deep emotion." [4] The results were thirty-nine-million-dollars worth of bond pledges in the course of one day.

Incident 4. During World War II the Army Signal Corps produced a twenty-minute film entitled, *Don't Be a Sucker,* the principal theme of which was that agitators use the antiminority-group prejudices of the individual as a means of manipulating him for their own ends. The format of the film was dramatic, with a plot that involved a young man who is favorably impressed by attacks on various minority groups by a street orator until he hears the story of a refugee professor who describes Germany under Hitler and the Nazi rise to power through the use of similar divide-and-conquer techniques. To test how effectively this film communicated its

[3] This incident is analyzed by C. N. Winslow in "Sympathetic Pennies: A Radio Case Study," *Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology,* XXXIX (1944), 174-79.

[4] R. K. Merton, *Mass Persuasion: The Social Psychology of a War Bond Drive.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1946.

messages, two investigators, Cooper and Dinerman,[5] showed it in 1947 and 1948 to several hundred persons, including groups of adults and high-school students. These were divided into experimental and control groups, and various test methods were used, including questionnaires and intensive interviews.

The film was intended to appeal to various religious groups—Jews, Catholics, and Protestants—and to show each group that everyone suffers under Nazism and that appeals to the prejudices of each are designed to divide and weaken them all.

The results of testing the experimental and control groups indicated that it was successful in routing specific messages to specific target groups but that there was much evidence of "boomerang" effects. The divide-and-conquer messages, intended for the minority groups, were misperceived by the majority groups as indicating that such techniques could not succeed in the United States. The Germans in the film were portrayed as physically attractive, with the result that many who saw the film in the test groups condoned rather than condemned Nazism. The American protagonist in the film was perceived as atypical, but his initial gullibility and later conversion was taken as evidence that Americans, even if temporarily misled, will soon see their mistake.

The foregoing are examples of "effects" of a mass communication. They are selected more or less at random but have one characteristic in common: The effects have been the subjects of systematic study by social scientists. In two of the programs—the Kate Smith and the *Truth or Consequences* broadcasts—members of the audience were asked to *do* something. In these examples the communicators use the mass medium with specific intent to elicit a particular kind of action. In one of the broadcasts—Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds*—there was only the generalized intent "to entertain." No specific action was expected. In the film, *Don't Be a Sucker*, there was a specific intent to modify attitudes or beliefs in a predetermined direction, but no overt action was indicated.

In three of the cases—the Kate Smith, *War of the Worlds*, and *Truth or Consequences* broadcasts—the magnitude and explosive

[5] Eunice Cooper and Helen Dinerman, "Analysis of the Film, *Don't Be a Sucker:* A Study in Communication," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, XV (1951), 243-64.

character of the "effects" were wholly unexpected. This is especially interesting in the case of *War of the Worlds*, where there is no evidence that the communicators had *any* intent other than "to entertain." But, oddly enough, even here only a certain segment—perhaps one person in six—responded overtly and explosively; the larger proportion of the listening audience was only "entertained" and did not feel impelled to run into the streets. Finally, in the single case where the communication utilizing the dramatic format was specifically designed to modify attitudes and beliefs, the effects, *as indicated by systematic controlled experiment*, were revealed to have been only partially successful and to have achieved certain "effects" which were precisely the opposite of those intended.

The Paradoxes of Mass Communication and the Need for a Systematic Theory

We here confront some of the paradoxes of mass communication. Communications with highly specific intent to modify attitudes or to elicit some form of action may achieve "effects" either wholly disproportionate to those intended or, at least, expected, or they may achieve effects which are contradictory to those intended. On the other hand, a communication planned neither to modify attitudes nor to elicit any overt behavior may have explosive effects on behavior.

How may we conceptualize results as diverse as these? Can these paradoxes be resolved?

Most of the systematic research on these problems has been done in the last ten years. Earlier than this were the pioneer studies of the Payne Fund on the effects of motion pictures on children. In general, these researches have been concerned with two types of problem: the study of the resources of the mass media as teaching devices in the school situation and the study of their social consequences in society. In the first category, the investigations have almost exclusively been concerned with films. While we are not here concerned with instructional uses of the mass media, some of the findings of the research in this area have important implications for the larger problem.

The research designs have been of two types: controlled experimental studies and field studies involving after-the-fact analyses of the impact of specific presentations via a mass medium. The con-

trolled experimental designs have been used to study the effects of films, especially those used in instruction. In these studies the experimental variables have included various aspects of the content, conditions of presentation, and audience factors—age, previous experience, educational level, motivational level, attitudes, etc. Test instruments, usually of the paper and pencil type, are constructed and applied before and after exposure to experimental and control groups. An excellent survey of the results of this type of research has been reported by the Instructional Film Research Program at Pennsylvania State College.[6] The elaborate studies of the effects of films used in the Army in World War II are reported by Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield.[7] In these studies the authors were particularly concerned with the evaluation of the effects of the so-called orientation films prepared for indoctrination purposes.

The after-the-fact researches have utilized a wide variety of research designs and, in general, have been concerned with the impact of commercial films, radio, and TV programs. Researches which took advantage of specific situations in which the effects were particularly dramatic are those of Cantril on the effects of the Martian-invasion broadcast and that of Merton on the Kate Smith bond drive. Other studies of this type have been concerned with content analysis of films, radio, or TV programs, studies of the social and psychological characteristics of the audiences of the various mass media, and studies of the conditions of listening or viewing.

In general, these researches make it clear that many widely held notions about the communicator-content-effects relationships, especially in the mass media, grossly oversimplify the problem. Legions of the decent, worried parents or nervous educators find it easy to assume a straight-line relationship between content and effects, especially when they note the massiveness of the response to a Kate Smith or a *War of the Worlds* broadcast. When they observe the

[6] Charles F. Hoban, Jr., and Edward B. van Ormer, *Instructional Film Research (Rapid Mass Learning), 1918-50.* State College, Pennsylvania. Instructional Film Research Program, Pennsylvania State College, 1951.

[7] Carl I. Hovland, Arthur A. Lumsdaine, and Fred D. Sheffield, *Experiments on Mass Communication.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1949.

excessive preoccupation of films and radio with violence and crime, their concern rises almost to the panic level.

This is understandable if we assume a simple, causal relationship between the content of the communication and its effect, with the implication that the content, especially via the mass media, is accepted primarily on its own terms. Such an assumption we may call the "one-way" or "transmission-belt" theory of communication. In bald form it asserts that ideas are embodied in communications content by communicators and may be transmitted relatively intact to potential recipients.

A different theory,[8] and one much closer to the findings of research, may be called the "two-way" theory of communication. It is basic to this conception (*a*) that the individual, in responding to communications content, is *perceiving* it, and (*b*) is perceiving it in a *situation.* Recent research on the so-called "social" factors in perception has revealed the importance of the total need-motivational-value-belief system of the individual as partial determiners of the percept, or, in fact, any type of human cognition.

The data obtained from these researches indicate that the needs, values, and motives of the individual, whether conscious or unconscious, determine in large measure not only how he sees his world but also how he thinks about it. This means that the individual's perceptual response to a stimulus is dynamic, not passive. It is a process through which the individual comes to terms with his environment at a dynamic, creative level. He is actually seeking meaningful organizations—meaningful, that is, in terms of its congruence with his existing interests, needs, and motives.

In the course of living, each of us has developed relatively stable cognitive "frames" in which we "place" or "structure" our experience. This is a selective process, largely automatic and unconscious, by which the individual gives meaning to his world. These cognitive structures or frames of reference are resistive to change and the individual strives to incorporate his experience in his existing frames of reference so as to change them as little as possible.

Bartlett calls this the "effort after meaning" which is the basis

[8] For a complete statement of this theory, see Franklin Fearing, "Toward a Psychological Theory of Human Communication," *Journal of Personality*, XXII (1953), 71-88.

of every "human cognitive reaction—perceiving, imaging, remembering and reasoning." Bartlett believes that the individual brings certain tendencies "with him into the situation with which he is called upon to deal [which] are utilized so as to make his reaction the 'easiest,' or the least disagreeable, or the quickest and least obstructed that is at the time possible. When we try to discover how this is done we find that always it is by an effort to connect what is given with something else. Thus, the immediately present 'stands for' something not immediately present, and 'meaning,' in a psychological sense, has its origin." [9] Since the frames of reference may differ, sometimes widely, the "meaning" that individuals perceive in stimuli, including the content of a communication, may also vary.

It is within this context that the response to communications content may be seen. It is a perceptual-cognitive process in which the individual reacts *on* the stimulus material (content) rather than passively responding *to* it. The response may appear to be passive in that the individual does not always behave in some overt manner, but it is a dynamic process nonetheless. It is a two-way process in the sense that there is a reciprocal relationship between the stimulus material and the interpreter-percipient. It is a process in which the perceiver structures the situation (stimulus material, content) in a manner which makes it meaningful to him in the sense indicated by Bartlett. In general, we want to be disturbed as little as possible and to continue to perceive the world in the ways that confirm our existing frames of reference. We become skilful in avoiding stimulus material (for example, communications content), which is likely to seriously challenge our established value systems. As the studies of Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet have shown, Republicans expose themselves to Republican propaganda and Democrats to Democratic propaganda.[10]

A notion dear to the hearts of the users of the mass media for educational-propaganda purposes, as well as to the disturbed parents observing Johnny watch the TV program, is that if the content is presented with sufficient clarity and skill it must "come through"

[9] F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering*, pp. 44-45. London: Cambridge University Press, 1932.

[10] Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, *The People's Choice*. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1944.

without distortion. This neglects the basic principle that all communications content *is in some degree ambiguous*, that is, permits variant interpretations. Under certain circumstances the amount of permissiveness may be reduced, but it may never be completely eliminated. In other words, there is always some room for the particular interpretive frames of reference of particular interpreters to operate.

Lazarsfeld, in commenting on the results of a study by Cooper and Jahoda [11] in which the effects of a series of cartoons designed to reduce prejudice were analyzed, says:

> The purpose of these cartoons was to caricature the intolerance exhibited by Mr. Biggott in a variety of situations. For instance, he was shown refusing to employ an American Indian because he did not like "foreigners and immigrants." In another cartoon, he was pictured standing in a cemetery in which soldiers of the recent war had been buried; in the caption he expressed indignation that Italian and Jewish and good Anglo-Saxon soldiers were buried without proper segregation. Another cartoon showed him on his sickbed, refusing a blood transfusion from anyone but a sixth-generation American.
>
> A number of people to whom the cartoons had been shown were interviewed to learn how the general reader would respond. Many people had no difficulty understanding the meaning and intent of the cartoons. But a large number of respondents, who, we know from other sources, were intolerant, misinterpreted the cartoon series and so avoided applying its message to themselves. For example, a man with strong isolationist tendencies said that the cemetery scene showed that Mr. Biggott was indignant that so many people had been killed in the war. An anti-Semitic worker interpreted the sickbed scene as demonstrating how rotten the capitalists are: They need special blood for a transfusion. Another respondent considered this cartoon a caricature of up-starts; he himself was a tenth-generation American while the fellow in the cartoon who was making the fuss was only a sixth-generation American.
>
> Often people turn tolerance propaganda upside down to protect their own prejudices. When an anti-Semitic respondent was asked who he thought created the Mr. Biggott cartoons, he had a simple answer: some organization that wanted to show that a lot of people dislike Jews so that the rest of the public would feel freer to express their own hostility towards Jews.[12]

[11] Eunice Cooper and Marie Jahoda, "The Evasion of Propaganda: How Prejudiced People Respond to Antiprejudice Propaganda," *Journal of Psychology*, XXIII (1947), 15-25.

[12] Paul Lazarsfeld, "Some Remarks on the Role of the Mass Media in So-called Tolerance Propaganda," *Journal of Social Issues*, III (1947), 17-25.

In this particular instance the material is relatively unambiguous, and the intent of the communicators as regards the desired change in behavior or attitude is highly specific and the interpretive frames of reference of the interpreters especially rigid. A wealth of experimental evidence indicates, however, that in all situations the perceptual response is a resultant of forces from within the organism acting on the stimulus material itself. When the stimulus configuration is sign-symbol material, *as it is in all communicative situations,* there is some evidence that the contribution of the individual to the perceptual outcome is likely to be greater than in the case of non-symbolic stimulus material.

If we accept the foregoing as an adequate conceptualization of content-interpreter relationships in the communication situation, it becomes clear that a communicator cannot transmit "ideas," as such, by mass or other types of communication no matter how hard he tries. Rather, ideas are the result of a complex perceptual-cognitive process involving the need-value-belief system of the interpreter, the stimulus material itself, and the situation in which the whole reaction occurs.

The nature of the resultant ideas may not be readily predicted from the examination of the content alone. There is, for example, a high incidence of violence and crime in TV programs and films. Socially and psychologically this is an important finding, but in the light of a two-way conception of communication we must be extremely cautious in taking it as evidence that the idea of violence, as such, is accepted, or that violence *is even perceived* by all the individuals exposed to these programs.

What is perceived as violence or crime by the adult with a conventional frame of reference may be perceived as something quite different by the child, and, if it should be perceived as crime, still other factors will determine whether this will result in overt action. In his introduction to Dallas Smythe's monitoring study of New York television,[18] Merton points this out very cogently. In Smythe's study it was shown that nearly 3,000 separate acts of violence were "committed" in New York television programs during the week of January 4-10, 1952, a substantial proportion of which were shown

[18] Dallas Smythe, *New York TV.* Monitoring Study No. 4. Urbana, Illinois: National Association of Educational Broadcasters, 1952.

during the 5:00 to 7:00 P.M. period—the so-called childrens' hours. Regarding these startling figures, Merton says:

> Nothing in these figures can tell us about the psychological and social effects upon television audiences of these numerous episodes of violence, nor does Mr. Smythe move beyond his evidence to guess at these effects. It cannot simply be taken for granted that violence on the screen is emotionally damaging to the spectator. When violence becomes conventionalized, for example, as in the well-grooved patterns of the Western movie, it may not cause the least distress or damage to children who know that the noble hero will irresistibly triumph over the black-hearted villains but that, for this to happen in proper style, the good men and bad men must first work their way through a sequence of ambushes, fist-fights, and gunplay in which injuries and even occasional death become more symbolic than real.[14]

Situational Factors

We have been stressing the importance of the interpreter's predispositions as factors which determine how he receives and interprets communications content. A second and closely related set of factors which play a part in determining the individual's selective sensitivity to presented content is the situation in which the whole complex transaction between him and the content occurs. Content and interpreter do not exist in a vacuum.

The term *situation* as used here includes not only the immediate physical situation in which the communication occurs but also the totality of related events at the time the communication occurs, the group affiliation of the interpreter, the climate of opinion, the nature of the communication medium, its credibility and potentialities as perceived by the interpreter, and the characteristics of particular communicators as perceived by the interpreter.

An important study yielding data on this point is that of Riley and Riley.[15] In this study the investigators tested the general hypothesis that the meaning the content of a mass medium of communication has for the individual is a function of his group affiliations. The variable which the investigators utilized was membership in peer groups of adolescent and preadolescent children. Two groups of children were studied, those who belonged in family groups but not

[14] Merton, *op. cit.*, p. v.

[15] Matilda W. Riley and John W. Riley, Jr., "A Sociological Approach to Communications Research," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, XV (1951), 445-60.

in peer groups and those who belonged in peer groups. Their preferences for and interest in various types of comic strips, radio, and TV programs were compared. It was found that younger children (both boys and girls) who have only family-group memberships, as compared with children who have peer-group memberships, have markedly greater preference for comics depicting animals, and that radio and TV programs depicting violence and action are more popular with children who do not have peer-group memberships than with those who do. The interpretations of the investigators are of interest.

> One key to such a difference lies, we believe, in the social structure itself. Those children who belong in family groups but not in peer groups are offered a set of adult values by their parents. This usually means that they are expected to help at home, to do well in school, to learn to strive in order to achieve, and in general to prepare for a future life as adults. For many ten- and twelve-year-old children these goals may often seem difficult, or even completely unattainable. Small wonder, then, that they love to read about animals like Bugs Bunny, whom they perceive as the complete negation of the goals and conventions established by adults. . . . On the other hand, peer group members, though still tickled by his humor, are less engrossed by Bugs Bunny. . . . This is because they have less need to defy parent values, since they, as members of two groups, have a choice between two sets of values—those of their parents and those of their peers.[16]

With respect to the preferences of children who did not belong to peer groups for programs depicting violence, it was found that such programs were more popular with those children who not only did not belong to peer groups *but gave evidence of wanting to belong*. Their sense of failure in their relations with their peers produced feelings of insecurity and inadequacy which, in the words of the investigators, was "highly productive of fantasies, and therefore [they] select a kind of media material, such as little animals or violent action, which would foster such fantasies." [17]

In Cantril's analyses of the results of the broadcast of the *War of the Worlds*, it is noted that many factors unrelated to the content of the broadcast itself supported certain types of interpretation. The very fact that the broadcast had the format of a news broad-

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 451.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 455.

cast and utilized radio made it real for many persons because radio is accepted as a vehicle for important announcements. The perceived credibility of the medium itself here supports the content. The level of sophistication as reflected in the amount of formal education appeared to be an important factor in determining the amount of credence the interpreters gave to the broadcast. Especially important were the patterns of fears, doubts, and uncertainties which existed at the time of the broadcast. Cantril's comments on this point are significant.

> The prolonged economic unrest and the consequent insecurity felt by many of the listeners was another cause for bewilderment. The depression had already lasted nearly ten years. People were still out of work. Why didn't somebody do something about it? . . . The lack of sophisticated, relatively stable economic or political frame of reference created in many persons a psychological disequilibrium which made them seek a standard of judgment for this particular event. It was another phenomenon in the outside world beyond their control and comprehension. . . . The situation was painfully serious and distressingly confused. What would happen, nobody could foresee. The Martian invasion was just another event reported over the radio. It was even more personally dangerous and no more enigmatic.[18]

A similar interpretation is offered by Winslow of the extraordinary response of the listening audience to the appeal by the announcer in the *Truth or Consequences* program.

> It might be pointed out that the conscription of millions of young men for military service has created new systems of stress in many personalities, especially in the members of servicemen's families. Persons have also become aware of a group membership composed of those who have relatives and friends in the armed forces. . . . The sending of pennies and messages to the mother of the marine would seem to have been actuated by the impingement of the mother's words and the announcer's appeal upon these systems of emotional and attitudinal stress that existed within the ego of persons who were members of the same group to which the mother belonged.[19]

Wiese and Cole,[20] in a study of the impact on children of the Hollywood entertainment film, *Tomorrow the World*, offer further

[18] Cantril, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-95.

[19] Winslow, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

[20] M. H. Wiese and S. G. Cole, "A Study of Children's Attitudes and Influence of a Commercial Motion Picture," *Journal of Psychology*, XXI (1946), 151-71.

evidence of the importance of the situational factors. This film sets forth the story of a Nazi youth who comes to the home of an American college professor and attempts to apply Nazi ideology and methods in his new home and to his playmates. The basic problem is concerned with what can be done with Emil, the Nazi youth. Should he be punished for his misdeeds and near-crime, or can he be re-educated? Wiese and Cole studied the interpretations of this film made by several thousand children from several communities and of differing socioeconomic status. They found what these children "saw" in the film was, in large measure, determined by their socioeconomic backgrounds.

> The Willowbrook youth [an underprivileged community]—Mexican, Negro, and others—approach Emil as a young gangster. They are not seriously shocked by his behavior, for they have dealt with many boys of his general type. . . . The Salt Lake City youth—Mormons and non-Mormons—are shocked by the Emil type. They seem quite unfamiliar with his kind and, therefore, suggest very much the same quality of courtesy, patience, and kindness that they would heap upon one of their own who had involved himself in bad company. . . . The Beverly Hills youth—Jewish and non-Jewish—appear to be familiar with the Emil type in literature and in group discussion. They are not shocked, therefore, but proceed to interpret his kind by a process of careful psychological analysis and to prescribe for him out of their grasp of such democratic values as are cherished in a highly favored social community like Beverly Hills.[21]

These studies document the conception that, in addition to the content itself, there are factors in the situation which make a considerable contribution both to the intensity and kind of effects. These factors may be conveniently classed into two groups: immediate and remote. In the first are all those immediately related to the conditions under which the content is presented. These include the medium itself, the conditions of listening or viewing, the presence or absence of others, etc. In the second are all the remote circumstances such as the interpreter's socioeconomic status, the amount of his formal education, his group affiliations, and even the more remote intangibles such as the climate of opinion, the existing patterns of tensions, fears, and anxieties in the society or community in which the communication occurs.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 169-70.

When the situational factors psychologically support the content, whether by intent or chance, the effects can be extraordinary, as the broadcast, *War of the Worlds*, demonstrated. At the other extreme, the situational factors might conceivably contradict content, with the result that it might have no "effect." Clearly, however, effects may not be conceived as the simply computed outcomes of content factors plus situational factors. As we have indicated, there is also the need-value-motivational state of the interpreter. These personality factors have complex relationships with situational factors as well as with content. Both content and situation are *perceived* by the interpreter. Not all the listeners to the *War of the Worlds* broadcast perceived in the same way the social climate existing at the time. Some, we may assume, perceived it "objectively" or "realistically"; for them it was at least intelligible and possibly less threatening. Others perceived it as chaotic. For them it was relatively incomprehensible. The relation of these two patterns of perception of the situation had important differential effects on the way the content of the broadcast was interpreted.

The complexity of the relationships between content, situation, and interpreter's predispositions is brought out in Merton's analysis of the impact of the Kate Smith marathon broadcast. Here, the content of the appeals was comparatively simple. The larger aspects of the situation included the war itself, the more or less obscure guilt feelings experienced by many civilians regarding the disparity between their contribution to the war effort and that of the men in uniform, and especially the symbolic values embodied in the figure of Kate Smith herself. This last, Merton feels, played a very important role. She was perceived as "sincerity incarnate," as a selfless, wholly honest person. This perception occurred in what Merton calls the climate or "context of distrust." This context of distrust occurs in a society which tends to exploit human relationships and produces a sense of alienation and estrangement which, Merton believes, actively demands reassurance. Kate Smith, as a radio personality, had this symbolic significance. This is an instance when there was a congruence of forces—content, situational, and predispositional—rarely found. It helps us to understand the fact that thirty-nine-million-dollars worth of bond pledges were traceable to this broadcast.

With respect to the effects of the factors in the immediate situation, more research is needed. The psychological properties of the medium itself can be very important, as Cantril's analysis has indicated. The sense that the medium is in *immediate* contact with the stimulus material is especially important in determining the character of the social impact of TV and radio. Other things being equal, this confers authenticity on the content to a degree equalled by no other mass medium. It is unlikely that a film depicting the landing of Martians, no matter how "realistic," could have had the effects which followed the radio broadcast.

The conditions of listening and viewing in the case of radio and TV are unique. The interpreters do not go out of the home, and the numbers engaged in listening or viewing are likely to be small. In the case of TV, because of the compelling visual character of the material, other simultaneous activities are not likely to occur. No one yet knows in any precise way the extent of the influence of these factors. But it is not for nothing that Gilbert Seldes admonishes those who write for TV not to forget that "the actors speaking the words you write will be seen and heard in the living room of an average American home, by a small group, members of a family and a friend or two." This, he says, "is the overmastering fact" that underlies every sound principle and good practice in television.[22]

There has been more research regarding the effects of the more remote factors, but the layman in particular tends to ignore them in his concern with "effects." It is an unusual parent who clearly perceives the ramifications and psychological implications of Johnny's peer-group memberships, or realizes that his perception and social utilization of material presented in radio, TV, or film programs is a function of the extent to which he is home-oriented or peer-group-oriented. To an even lesser extent are the sometimes bizarre and frequently massive outcomes of particular radio and film presentations understood in any other terms than the content itself as the simple "cause."

If the analysis up to this point is substantially correct, it is clear that communication via the mass media involves highly complex

[22] Gilbert Seldes, *Writing for Television.* New York: Doubleday & Co., 1952.

interdependent relations between content, interpreter predispositions, and situational factors, the outcomes of which will be manifested in very diverse forms and, in the case of a specific communication, will be extremely difficult to predict. The results of both the after-the-fact and the experimentally controlled research confirm this. This research has revealed some of the variables and indicated that they interact in a highly dynamic manner, and that no single causal factor can be isolated.

In the present discussion this has been broadly generalized as the "two-way" theory of communication. The great variety of effects, which such a theory would lead us to expect and which systematic research actually reveals, may fall into certain patterns in terms of their dynamics and social function. The patterns described below do not, of course, cover all possible content-effects relationships. They may be regarded as typical, however, of some of the more important forms which these relationships take. Their value for present purposes lies in what they reveal regarding the dynamics and function of mass communication in society.

Reinforcement and Transmission of Existing Value Systems

Since man became a social animal capable of creating and utilizing symbols, he has used these devices as a means of understanding himself, his social role, and the values of his group. This is one of the contexts within which all forms of storytelling may be seen. The folk tale, medieval morality play, classic drama, as well as films, radio, and TV programs both reflect and transmit the major values of a culture. Wolfenstein and Leites, in their penetrating study of the movies, make this point clear when they relate film content to "daydreams."

> Daydreams provide the starting point for literary and dramatic productions. The capacity for transforming daydreams into such productions gets specialized in poets, playwrights, novelists, script-writers. . . . Through the skilful use of the literary or dramatic medium, the author is able to make his transformed daydreams accessible to large numbers of people.[28]

[28] Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites, *Movies: A Psychological Study*, p. 12. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1950.

This, they believe, is necessary if a group of people is to share a common culture. When we go to the movies the story or the drama becomes the "daydream" shared with millions of others. This sharing has the "further advantage over the private daydream in that we know others share it, and we feel that it is about others rather than about ourselves. In this way, the embarrassments and anxieties which often haunt private daydreams are removed." The American dream of success, of which better jobs, higher pay, the acquisition of motor-cars are the symbols, are all expressed in the shared daydreams.

> The common daydreams of a culture are in part the sources, in part the products of its popular myths, stories, plays, and films. Where these productions gain the sympathetic response of a wide audience, it is likely that their producers have tapped within themselves the reservoir of common daydreams. The corresponding daydreams, imperfectly formed and only partially conscious, are evoked in the audience and given more definite shape. Numerous young men, for instance, may be developing out of experience and fantasy, out of disconnected impressions and feelings, the image of their ideal girl. A new type of movie heroine appears, and the image comes to life; they see how the girl, who fits their half-formulated wishes, looks and talks and how she behaves with her man.[24]

This type of "effects" does not necessarily result in any form of immediately observable behavior; for this reason the interpreter seems to have a relatively passive relationship with the content. Through processes of identification he comes to understand the values of his culture, or he finds statements in dramatic form which interpret the standard patterns of human relationship with which, otherwise, he has had only piecemeal contact. The interpreter finds much here that is socially useful to him—he learns what is expected of him in a variety of human situations. In this very broad sense, the mass media are the conveyors of culture; they certainly reflect it.

What is reflected may be distasteful to many persons; for example, violence. It is necessary to remember that violence, hostility, and conflict are the common, not exceptional, characteristics of contemporary society.

Also, what is reflected may be seen by many persons as "inaccurate" or "untrue," in the sense that it is seen as different from or even as a contradiction of "reality" *as they perceive it.* Whether

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

one regards the life patterns presented by Horatio Alger as an accurate depiction of what a poor boy might expect in the United States of America or as pure fantasy is largely a function of one's own value system and level of sophistication. In any case, the Horatio Alger stories did convey values to which a substantial proportion of the population in the early nineteen hundreds subscribed.

When the discrepancy between the myth and the reality becomes marked, as judged by independent criteria, it is probable that such terms as "escapism," "daydreaming," and "fantasy" will be applied in a sense that derogates the whole process, even the total enterprise of mass communication. It is possible, of course, since mass communications are a business enterprise as well as instruments for the transmission of culture, that values, norms of behavior, or goals are repeatedly presented which seem demonstrably at variance with "reality" on the grounds that these are less disturbing to the interpreter because they are more familiar and, hence, more likely to be profitable.

The hypothesis that the mass media reflect value systems, satisfy needs of a society, whether consciously or unconsciously held, furnishes the theoretical basis for extensive research in which the content of films and other mass media are analyzed in order to discover what the value-belief patterns of a given society are. We have already referred to the Wolfenstein and Leites study. Kracauer's extensive study of the content of films produced in Germany during the period between 1922 and the beginning of the Hitler regime is based on this hypothesis.[25] "What films reflect," he says, "are not so much explicit credoes as psychological dispositions—those deep layers of collective mentality which extend more or less below the dimensions of consciousness." He finds that the German films produced during this period indicate certain attitudes toward life, power, and human relationships which are premonitory of the acceptance of a Nazi ideology.

In 1946 Kracauer examined Hollywood entertainment films from the same point of view.[26] He was especially concerned with the

[25] Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1947.

[26] Siegfried Kracauer, "Hollywood's Terror Films: Do They Reflect an American State of Mind?" *Commentary*, II (1946), 132-36.

amount of sadistic violence which these films contain. He notes that the films of this period are quite unlike the gangster movies of an earlier era in that they are less concerned with social abuses than with psychological aberrations. It is especially striking, he believes, that the current (1946) approach fails to offer solutions to the problems raised, but, instead, creates an "all-pervasive fear that threatens the psychic integrity of the average person. . . ." Current films do not concern themselves so much with specific evildoers (e.g., gangsters) but with depicting an atmosphere of general insecurity in which everybody is afraid of everybody else. Everyday life is seen as producing anguish and destruction. Villains do not look like villains but, rather, like your next-door neighbor. There is much unmotivated brutality, but especially there is an emphasis on psychological destruction. The females whom the villains want to do away with are not killed but are driven insane. The uneasiness stirred up by the spectacle of the everyday world full of deceit, unimaginable and undetected horrors, is not allayed by the happy ending. On the contrary, the impression is conveyed that nothing can be done about it. Kracauer feels that this type of violence and horror reflects a situation which is similar to the kinds of values reflected in the films of the pre-Hitler period in Germany.

Problem-solving and the Acquisition of New Experience

Closely related to the type of effect just described is that in which the content of the communication is utilized by the individual as a means of mastering particular problems, or as a form of adjustment to social stress. We do not include here the use of the mass media in the formal instructional situation but, rather, in the situations in which films, radio, or TV are sought by the individual as a means of understanding himself or his world or as a means of acquiring new experience. The important distinction between this type of effect and that just described is that, in the latter, the interpreter seeks something from the content to which he exposes himself; his relationship with it has a positive and dynamic character as contrasted with the relatively passive response which occurs in the first type. Studies such as Warner and Henry's[27] and

[27] W. L. Warner and W. E. Henry, "The Radio Day-time Serial: A Symbolic Analysis," *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, XXXVII (1948), 3-71.

Herzog's[28] on the effects of the daytime radio serials on women indicate that these programs provide the listeners with techniques for solving personal and interpersonal problems.

Although the term *escape* as applied to effects of mass communication is always somewhat ambiguous, it could be applied here in the sense that the interpreter may seek types of experience which are sharply different from those of his everyday life. The study referred to earlier, describing the differences between the radio- and TV-program preferences of children who belong to peer groups and those who do not, bears on this point. The children who did not have peer-group memberships prefer content (e.g., violence) which enables them to overcome their feeling of social inadequacy resulting from the exclusive association with the values of adults. The dynamics underlying these forms of response to communications content are subtle and complex and need further study. This is especially true of those forms of response to communications content in which the individual seeks some sort of substitute satisfaction as an adjustment to frustration. The search for "excitement" or "thrills" may involve nothing more than a harmless, even healthy safety-valve type of response. It may, on the other hand, delay or actually prevent the interpreter from attacking his real problems.

Muhlen, in an interesting discussion of this problem with special reference to the depiction of violence in the mass media, makes a distinction between the adult and the adolescent.[29] Many adults in our society are frustrated by prohibitions which prevent them from solving their problems through aggression, destruction, and violence. For such persons, "the vicarious experience offered by mass entertainment may legitimately and usefully help them find escapes from, or solutions of, these conflicts." But for a young mind, particularly an adolescent, such experience may create a picture of a world in which violence is *accepted* as a normal way of life. He fears that the continuous presentation of these ideas via the mass media, reflecting, as they do, partially repressed attitudes of aggression, "makes them appear to young minds as a permissible reality, and confirms them as primary forces in future social life."

[28] Herta Herzog, "On Borrowed Experience," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, IX (1941), 65-94.

[29] N. Muhlen, "Comic Books and Other Horrors: Prep School for Totalitarian Society?" *Commentary*, VII (1949), 80-87.

Without necessarily accepting Muhlen's distinction between adolescent and adult levels, it is clear that existing stresses, both within the individual and in society, are extremely important in determining the patterns of impact of the mass media. Under conditions of stress, the individual seeks meaning in some form of structured experience. This is not a sign of weakness, although it is frequently exploited as such. Rather, it is a legitimate use of the symbolic resources of human society for the purpose of mastering reality. The need for meaning becomes particularly acute in the context of distrust. Such a context occurs, as Merton has pointed out,[30] in a society in which human relations are instrumentalized and in which insecurity and uncertainty are the usual, not exceptional, conditions of human existence. The structurizations which the individual seeks may be in the form of affirmations of known and trusted values. Or he may seek substitute outlets for his frustrations, his inhibited aggressions, and his feelings of inadequacy or social helplessness.

The mass media, especially films, will serve both needs. They may provide affirmations in the form of the success story, the contemporary equivalent of the Horatio Alger sagas, or they may provide opportunities for the vicarious experience of violence and destruction. Neither of these, as such, need be viewed necessarily with moral indignation, although the society which makes them inevitable may be the subject of moral appraisal. It should be pointed out that the role of the mass media in relation to human stress is not limited to providing reassurrance or outlets for repressed hostilities. They may serve a more positive function. They may provide opportunities for the exploration of intellectual problems, interpretations of the human situation, and tentative solutions to social problems. In so doing, they achieve a status co-ordinate with that of literature and the arts.

Overt Action

When there is congruence between content, interpreter predispositions, and situational factors, the result of exposure to specific communications content may be specific, overt action. Examples

[30] Merton, *op. cit.*

of this are the responses of a certain segment of the listening audience to the *War of the Worlds* broadcast and the Kate Smith appeals. These situations are likely to be relatively infrequent, since the congruent occurrence of the necessary factors is rare. It is also possible that, for overt and relatively immediate action to occur, the content must specifically indicate such action ("buy a bond") or must contain very strong implications for action. It is possible, for example, that a film which presents a strong case against race prejudice—for example, *Don't Be a Sucker*, already referred to—may be highly congruent with the predispositions of a particular observer and with existing situational factors and yet not result in any overt action. The film does not contain "directions" for any sort of specific action.

Evasion of the Content of the Communication

The content may be misperceived or its meaning distorted or misapplied as a result of predispositions on the part of interpreters which are contradictory to the content. These have been called evasion mechanisms. The studies of Kendall and Wolf and of Cooper and Jahoda of the ways in which interpreters *misinterpret* messages conveyed in pro-tolerance communications, mentioned earlier, and the study of Wilner[81] of responses to a Hollywood feature-film, *Home of the Brave*, furnish examples of this pattern. Kendall and Wolf analyzed the process of evasion in the cases of prejudiced interpreters who were presented with a series of anti-prejudice cartoons. The cartoons presented a character, Mr. Biggott, designed to lampoon race prejudice. The reactions of a group of subjects who were known to be prejudiced but who were not aware of their prejudice were studied. They misperceived, or "misunderstood," the cartoon. Kendall and Wolf have schematized the mechanisms of evasion as follows:[82]

[81] Daniel Wilner, "Attitude as a Determinant of Perception in the Mass Media of Communication: Reactions to the Motion Picture, *Home of the Brave*." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1950.

[82] Patricia L. Kendall and Katherine M. Wolf, "The Analysis of Deviant Cases in Communications Research," in *Communications Research, 1948-49*, pp. 152-79. New York: Harper & Bros., 1949.

Prejudiced and unaware reader
↓
Identification with Mr. Biggott
and momentary understanding
↓
Resistance:
Desire for escape from identification
↓
Disidentification mechanisms
(Caricaturing Mr. Biggott; making him intellectually or socially inferior; transforming him into a Jew or a foreigner)
↓
Derailment of understanding
↓
Misunderstands

In Wilner's study the role of attitudes as determiners of perceptions was examined.[33] He utilized a Hollywood feature-film, *The Home of the Brave*, which in a sympathetic and highly dramatic manner presented the dilemma of the Negro in our society. Wilner pretested his audience to determine the degree to which they were prejudiced regarding Negro-white relationships. He discovered significant differences between the high- and low-prejudiced persons in their perceptions and understanding of certain film sequences and characters. In particular, it was found that, intentionally or unintentionally, the film depicted certain characters and sequences in such a manner as to make them more or less permissive, as regards interpretation. Where such permissiveness was possible, the interpretation was consistent with the degree of prejudice of the interpreters. In the light of these results it is possible to understand the reported box-office success of this film in the South.

These patterns of impact, sometimes called the "boomerang effect," may be interpreted psychologically as an attempt on the part of the interpreter to alter his cognitive frames of reference as little as possible when presented with conflicting stimulus material. We do not refer here to the response of the individual who completely rejects the material, or who, as a result of intellectual-logical analysis, disagrees with it. Rather, in these examples the individual is able to re-structure the content so as to make it acceptable, or at

[33] Wilner, *op. cit.*

least tolerable. Because perception is selective, and because content, considered as stimulus material, is more or less ambiguous, this kind of distortion always occurs in some degree. In its simplest form the interpreter perceives the content in accordance with his predisposition, regardless of the character of the content as determined by independent criteria.

Results of Experimental Studies

The "effects" referred to in this category are not strictly coordinate with those in the other categories. They are important, however, because they frequently form the basis for sweeping conclusions regarding the effects of the mass media. In the experimental studies as we have seen, the design usually calls for a "before-and-after" testing, involving the use of a battery of paper-and-pencil tests constructed to measure the effects of a specific communications content. If the differences in scores are statistically reliable, the content is presumed to have had "effects."

Such effects are valid in the extent to which they predict some sort of subsequent action. But, as Flowerman [84] has pointed out, it is rarely possible to predict action from paper-and-pencil tests. At best they are measures of potential action. Other factors have to operate subsequent to exposure if the measured "effect" expresses itself in action. There are very few studies in which any form of overt behavior which could be measured was predicted and occurred on the basis of the preliminary tests. The Merton study of the behavioral effects of the Kate Smith broadcasts and the Cantril study of the Martian invasion were, of course, after-the-fact studies. Paper-and-pencil testing as a part of systematic experimental analyses of the effects of the mass media of communication are highly important, but the relationship between such measured effects and subsequent behavior is not a simple straight-line relationship.

Conclusions

These, then, are some of the more frequent patterns of impact. They should be considered not as a typology of individuals but of patterns. Certainly not all patterns of impact can be neatly typed in

[84] Samuel H. Flowerman, "Mass Propaganda in the War against Bigotry," *Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology*, XLII (1947), 429-39.

these categories, and a single communication content may have results which fall into more than one or into all of these patterns. They indicate, in part, however, the diversity and subtlety of the responses which the content of the mass media are capable of eliciting.

We may now be in a position to resolve some of the paradoxes of communication effects. In the light of the foregoing discussion, the following generalizations suggest themselves:

(*a*) The responses to content of the mass media of communication are determined by a large number of factors, only one of which is the content itself.

(*b*) More specifically, the relationship of the interpreter to content has the characteristics of perception, the course of which is determined by his need-value-motivational system, the total situation in which the process occurs, and the content.

(*c*) The outcomes ("effects") of exposure to particular content are extremely diverse and cannot be predicted in any particular case except on the basis of comprehensive knowledge of the content itself, the need-value system of the interpreter, and the characteristics of the total situation as perceived by the interpreter.

(*d*) The outcomes or impact of exposure to content may or may not take the form of overt behavior.

(*e*) Whatever form the response to content may take, covert or overt, it is always dynamic in the sense that it serves the social-psychological needs of the interpreter.

(*f*) In general, the content of the mass media reflects existing value systems of the society in which they occur.

CHAPTER IX

The Content and Effects of Broadcasting

DALLAS W. SMYTHE

In this chapter we will be considering the material which comes on the TV screen and over the radio, and its effects. This is a large order, for the number of radio and TV programs broadcast every day in the year in the United States is very great. No one has ever measured all of it over the same interval of time. When we attempt to determine the content of TV and radio, we are forced to rely on samplings. When we come to consider the effects of all this material, we are even more certainly on a frontier of knowledge. There are a number of theories about the effects of mass communications in general. We will consider some of them as they apply to radio and TV, but it is appropriate to warn the reader at the outset that these theories are still far from thoroughly tested or adequately developed.

The Sources and Uses of Broadcasting Content

The content of broadcasting is that which is communicated by all the mass-communications media. It is one of the links in the chain of events which relates the communicator to the receiver of communications. In order to appreciate the significance of the content of broadcasting, it is necessary to understand both the nature of the sources of this content and the uses which the receivers make of the content.

A number of different social agencies share responsibility for the fact that the content of broadcasting is what it is at any particular time. Consequently, the significance or the usefulness of the content of broadcasting is judged by participating agencies according to their own standards and purposes. Under the system of broadcasting which we have in the United States, the most imme-

diate source of content is a group of commercial agencies. That is to say, the broadcasting stations and networks themselves are predominantly business enterprises, organized for profit. They obtain their revenue from the sale of time for the use of advertisers. The source of the entertainment and the information on our broadcasting channels, as well as the advertising "messages," is chiefly business organizations. Educational institutions constitute a minor source of such programs and will be considered later in this discussion.

Even this part of the broadcasting system is not as simply organized as these comments might imply, for responsibility for the content of broadcasting is ambiguously divided. The *advertiser* looks like the ultimate source of your broadcast programs. Such and such a crooner is brought to you by the XYZ Company. But the continuation of this program on the air depends on the "feedback" from the audience to the XYZ Company in the form of information justifying the conclusion that purchases of the product advertised on the program have increased. Since proof that any single "cause" is responsible for increased or decreased sales of a product is extremely difficult to secure, the continuation of a particular advertiser's program on the air depends on the *belief* that the program is successful. Thus, the *market-research* and *audience-measurement* organizations, through their efforts to sell their services to the advertiser, share with the advertiser the responsibility for what is on the air.

Paradoxically, while the advertiser is responsible for American radio and TV programming, he seldom if ever actually "produces" it. By "producing" we mean assembling the writers, actors, directors, and other talent necessary to the creation of the program and actually performing it. This function is divided between the *advertising agencies* and the networks and broadcasting stations. The bulk of network radio programs is produced by the advertising agencies, working in the physical facilities of the networks and stations; the remainder is produced by people hired by the networks and stations. In the case of television, the proportion is about fifty-fifty as between programs produced by the advertising agencies and those provided by the networks and stations.

There still remains to be mentioned one other commercial institution which is responsible for part of the broadcast programming. A substantial proportion of the advertising content in broadcasting

is in the form of national "spot" advertising, that is, recorded advertisements for products distributed nationally which are played by the local radio and TV station. This part of programming is handled by station representatives, business organizations which operate on the basis of commissions on the sale of station time for such material.

Standing behind the commercial institutions which have the primary responsibility for our broadcast fare are the public institutions which establish public policy. The present form and content of what we hear and see on our broadcast receiving sets is affected to some degree by the laws on communications made by *Congress* and by the rules established by the *Federal Communications Commission*, which licenses and regulates the broadcast stations. Less formal public institutions, such as *organized listener and viewer groups* in various states, also influence to some extent the content of radio and TV programs.

Much more important than these private oganizations in their effects on radio and TV program content are the *trade magazines* devoted to the broadcasting industry and the *trade associations* of businessmen connected with broadcasting. Underlying the mere fact of the existence of a particular kind of broadcast program at a given time (i.e., color as against black-and-white television) are the policies of the *manufacturers of broadcast equipment* and of their *trade associations* as well as those of the *American Telephone and Telegraph Company*, which carries the programs from station to station for network broadcasting.

We have noted how the meaning of the content of broadcasting may be different according to the interests of the various sources which contribute to its production. A parallel situation exists on the receivers' side. But, because in our culture people are relatively unorganized for the purpose of consuming things and services, it is much harder to identify the chief differences between receivers and their interests. It is obvious, for instance, that, while some people like commercial advertisements on radio and TV and are psychologically "tuned" in to perceive and enjoy them in detail, many others more or less automatically ignore them. For the latter, such program material is useless; in fact it may be a positive annoyance. Similarly, audiences for crime drama on radio and TV are more likely to be found among a given number of city dwellers than

among the same number of farm dwellers. Teen-agers, through a complicated process of peer-group consensus, may make or break (in cycles) the success of a crooner of popular songs. The small but resolute body of radio listeners devoted to "good" music may use their radios for such programs alone, while successfully appealing through fan mail to a station like WQXR in New York to maintain such programs on the air. These illustrations serve to emphasize that radio and TV program content means different things to different people, and frequently it means different things to different people at different times and in different associations with other people.

Analysis of Content

Under these conditions it is obvious that the content of radio and TV *might* be measured from the standpoint of any one of the myriad personal and group interests which play on it, either from the communicator's side or the receiver's side. But, while such appraisals are useful to those whose interests they illuminate, it is also evident that any one such content study is tangential to the whole situation. Studies of content for purposes of educational policy seem to use much the same categories and concepts even when done by different persons at different times. These studies and their categories have been used as guides for national policy purposes by the Congress and the Federal Communications Commission. In the studies drawn on below, customary categories were used, such as drama, news, sports, etc. In our presentation we have grouped these categories into three kinds of program classes: *entertainment-type*, where the predominant manifest intent was to entertain; *information-type*, where the imparting of information was the prime purpose; and *orientation-type*, where effecting attitudes and values was the predominant manifest intent. These groupings are rough, for obviously program classes placed in any one of the three groups may also partake of the characteristics of the other two groups.

THE CONTENT OF RADIO PROGRAMS

From the standpoint of the people who produce it, the advertising content is the most important. No comprehensive measure-

ment of the amount of advertising on radio is available for recent years.[1] In the absence of quantitative data one can only form inferences based on personal experience.

Conservatively estimated, the more-than-one-hundred noncommercial (educational) radio stations on the air, both AM and FM, provide less than 1 per cent of the total program time in which broadcast programs are beamed to the public. It is evident, therefore, that while programs emanating from educationally owned and operated radio stations may be qualitatively very important, they bulk extremely small in the total quantity of radio programming. Appraising the total radio content in the United States is difficult because no official data are available for recent years and because the most recent industry estimates of commercial-station program content were made in 1946.[2] Data on educational-station program content are available from annual studies made by the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB) since 1949.

It appears that about three-fourths of commercial radio programming consists of entertainment-type program classes, for in 1946 the total of such program classes constituted 76 per cent of all commercial radio time. Programs which primarily convey information provided another 16 per cent, while programs which are primarily orientational in their manifest content supplied the remainder. Of course these are not water-tight categories; entertainment-type programs may also provide information and orientation, and vice versa.

Within the dominant entertainment-type segment of radio programming, music programs bulk largest. Two-fifths of commercial radio program time consisted in music in 1946. Popular and dance music alone made up more than one-fourth of the total time—standing about where crime and western drama are in big-city TV. Semi-

[1] The Federal Communications Commission has failed to publish annually the "statistical summaries and trends" in radio programming, including the amount of commercial time, as promised in its famous "Bluebook," *Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees*, p. 58. Washington: Federal Communications Commission, March 7, 1946.

[2] Kenneth Baker, "An Analysis of Radio's Programming," in *Communications Research, 1948-49*. Edited by Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Frank Stanton. New York: Harper & Bros., 1949.

classical and classical music provide another 8 per cent, while old familiar and western music constitute 7 per cent.

The second largest class of entertainment-type programs on commercial radio appear to be drama programs, which supplied 16 per cent of all program time in 1946. Within this group the daytime serial ("soap opera") stood first, with 6 per cent of total time—just slightly higher than the 4 to 5 per cent of big-city TV time now given to the TV counterpart, domestic drama. Mystery drama on radio provided only 3 per cent in 1946—a figure which casual observation of present radio suggests would need to be revised upward today. Comedy drama provided 2 per cent, while "other" drama accounted for 5 per cent of broadcasting time.

Variety programs constitute the third largest component in the entertainment-type programming of commercial radio, accounting for 7 per cent of the total time. Quiz programs come fourth, with 6 per cent, followed by sports (4 per cent) and miscellaneous programs (2 per cent).

Turning now to the area of information-type programming, we find that news and commentators dominate this field with 13 per cent of total commercial radio time. Farm programs with 2 per cent and homemaking programs with 1 per cent round out this segment.

In the orientation-type program area, religious programs, with 6 per cent of the total time, stand out as the most important type. "Talks"—presumably about public issues, or such matters as personal relations—make up another 3 per cent, while "forums and panels" amount to 1 per cent.

Because so much attention is currently given to noncommercial (educational) broadcasting, it may be of interest here to compare the programming of these stations with that of their commercial contemporaries in the field of AM and FM broadcasting. Studies made by the NAEB in 1949 and 1950 reveal that entertainment-type programming is proportionately smaller in emphasis and that information-type programming is relatively larger for noncommercial than for commercial radio broadcasting.

The noncommercial AM stations devoted 53 per cent of their program time in 1949, and 59 per cent in 1950, to entertainment-type programs. This was between one-fourth and one-fifth less emphasis on these programs than was true of commercial AM sta-

tions. The noncommercial AM stations supplied 37 per cent of their time in 1949, and 32 per cent in 1950, in the form of information-type programs. This contrasts with the 16 per cent for the commercial AM stations. No appreciable difference existed, however, in the proportion of time devoted to orientation-type programs. In 1949 and 1950 the noncommercial AM stations devoted about 10 per cent of their time to this type of program.

Within the segment of the entertainment-type program, the chief differences between commercial and noncommercial AM programming lie in the treatment accorded drama, variety, quiz, and music programs. Noncommercial AM stations offered less than 2 per cent of their time in the form of drama (as contrasted with 16 per cent for commercial radio). There were no variety programs on them in 1950 (and less than 1 per cent in 1949), while commercial radio gave 7 per cent to this program class. Likewise, no quiz programs appeared on noncommercial AM stations in 1949 or 1950, while they made up 6 per cent of all commercial radio time. Conversely, noncommercial AM stations offered more music than did the commercial stations, with 45 per cent in 1949 and 52 per cent in 1950 (as against 41 per cent for commercial radio). Moreover, the composition of the music was strikingly different. Classical and semi-classical music comprised 8 per cent of commercial AM; they provided 31 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively, of noncommercial AM program time in 1949 and 1950. This was a difference in the order of four or five to one. And proportionately, the noncommercial AM stations broadcast half the quantity of popular and dance music that commercial stations did. Such programs constituted 26 per cent of all commercial station program time; they amounted to only 13 per cent of total time on noncommercial AM stations in 1949 and 1950.

Noncommercial AM stations devote slightly less time to news and commentators than do the commercial stations (10 per cent in both 1949 and 1950 as against 13 per cent). Information (general) amounted to 14 per cent of total broadcasting time on noncommercial AM stations in 1950, whereas none was reported for the commercial AM stations. Farm-information programs and home-making programs are found more often on noncommercial than on commercial stations.

In the orientation-type program, the major difference between the two types of radio service lies in the treatment accorded religion and public issues. As one might expect, the noncommercial AM stations, mostly operated by educational institutions, give relatively less emphasis to religion with 3 per cent of their time in 1950 to religion, while the commercial radio stations gave religion 6 per cent. In the area of public issues and public affairs, the noncommercial stations provide much more than do the commercial stations. Lastly, one finds traces of public events programming on noncommercial radio but none on commercial broadcasting. And while public institutional programs were an appreciable part of the radio fare provided by noncommercial AM stations, none appear in commercial radio programming.

The FM stations[8] which are operated noncommercially do not have markedly different program offerings in the aggregate from the AM stations which are operated noncommercially. Music and sports among the entertainment-type programs are slightly more prevalent on FM than on AM. News programs are slightly less common on FM than on noncommercial AM, as is also the case with farm-information programs. Information (general) is more often found on FM than on AM. Public issues programs declined by one-half on both the FM and AM stations between 1949 and 1950, while public institutional programs trebled in both cases.

THE CONTENT OF TELEVISION BROADCASTS

In 1952, about one out of every five minutes of big-city TV program time was advertising material. These figures refer to New York City and Los Angeles programs and were obtained in studies conducted by the National Association of Educational Broadcasters with funds supplied by the Fund for Adult Education of the Ford Foundation. On the basis of a similar week's study of the programs of New Haven, Connecticut, a smaller city with only one TV station, it appears that advertising matter is more abundant on small-city TV than on large-city TV. In 1952, New Haven received advertising matter for one out of every four minutes of program time.

[8] Commercial FM station programs are not included because the bulk of them are duplications of commercial AM station programs, and no data are available on them.

If we disregard advertising time and assume that the other program material is equal to 100 per cent, we may state what the program content of TV is like, based on the same NAEB studies. We find that the largest single element in TV programming is the entertainment-type program. These programs amount to just about three-fourths of all the time the stations are on the air, in both the larger and the smaller cities. Programs which primarily convey information amount to slightly less than one-fifth of the total time. The orientation-type programs constitute about one-twentieth of the total time.

Within the group of entertainment-type programs, by all odds, the largest class is drama, which is TV's counterpart to radio's music. This includes all kinds of drama, regardless of the form, whether motion pictures or live TV drama. In the largest cities, TV drama seems to be increasing. In 1951 in both New York and Los Angeles, drama programs required 33 per cent of total broadcasting time. New York drama programs occupied 42 per cent of broadcasting time in 1952 and 47 per cent by January, 1953. New Haven, a single-station, smaller city, had 29 per cent in all forms of drama in 1952, a substantially smaller proportion than in New York the same year.

In New York, the only large city where studies have been made in more than one year, the largest single class of drama is crime drama, which is also apparently steadily increasing. In 1951, crime drama accounted for 10 per cent of all program time; in 1952 it had risen to 14.8 per cent, and in 1953 it was up to 15.3 per cent. In the smaller city of New Haven, crime drama was the largest class of drama in point of frequency and took 9 per cent of total time in 1952. The second largest class of drama in New York has consistently been western drama (about 7 per cent). In New Haven, domestic drama was the second largest class.

When drama is viewed from the standpoint of its presumptive audience, it falls into two parts: drama aimed at the general audience, and drama aimed at the child audience (as determined by specific content and format, not by type of drama). Drama for the general audience dominates the total. The children's drama in 1951 amounted to 7 per cent of Los Angeles TV program time and to 8 per cent of New York's programming. Since then, there

has been a decline in this class of drama—with only 4 per cent of the total time in New York in 1953 falling within this class. This does not mean, however, that there has been a decline in the total drama programming *available* to children. Between the hours, 5:00 to 7:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, and all day Saturday and Sunday until 7:00 P.M.—what we have called the "children hours"—the total of drama programming in New York was about 57 per cent of the total time in the years 1951-53. In those hours, children's drama decreased from 30 per cent in 1951 to 7 per cent in 1953, while general drama increased from 25 per cent in 1951 to 51 per cent in 1953.

Total broadcasting time has been classified so as to distinguish the "adult hours," the "domestic hours," and the "late hours," as well as the "children hours." Drama is the most common type of TV program in all of these segments of broadcasting time. It is relatively most important in the late hours. For example, in New York in 1953, it amounted to 58 per cent of this segment. In the adult hours, drama provided half of the programming, while in the domestic hours it was only 33 per cent. New Haven's programming reveals the same relative standing as between the different time segments but at a lower saturation level, as far as drama is concerned.

Variety programs aimed at the general audience or at special audiences of housewives or children are the second largest block of entertainment-type programs on TV in every city studied, the time allotment being about 20 per cent in 1951, but declining to 10 or 15 per cent by 1953. Four other types of entertainment supply almost all the remaining entertainment-type TV programming. These are (in the order of their importance in New York in 1953) quiz, stunts, and contest programs (5.7 per cent), sports events (5.5 per cent), music programs (4.4 per cent), and personalities programs (2.7 per cent). Some differences appear between cities in these respects. New Haven, for example, was provided with 11 per cent of total program time in sports events in 1952, and with 10 per cent in quiz, stunts, and contests. For Los Angeles in 1951 the third largest form of entertainment-type program was music (8.7 per cent), of which all but 0.3 per cent was popular music. No attempt was made in these studies to inventory the kinds of programs which might have been presented on TV. Nevertheless,

traces were found in TV programs of several types of programs, the resources for which in our culture are very rich and varied. Fine arts (painting, sculpture, architecture, etc.) and literature were represented in the 1953 New York study by 123 minutes of program time, or 0.3 per cent of all TV program time. In 1951 and 1952, 0.1 per cent was given to this type. No programs whatever of fine arts and literature were observed in Los Angeles or in New Haven. A second class of program of which only traces were observed was the dance (ballet and other nonvaudeville-style dancing) of which 0.1 per cent appeared in New York in 1951 and 1953, and none in Los Angeles or New Haven.

The second largest segment of TV program time is devoted to information-type material—running plus or minus a few points from 20 per cent in the various cities. News is the largest class of programs in this group. In New York in 1953, it amounted to 8 per cent of all program time; in New Haven in 1952, 13 per cent; and in Los Angeles in 1951, 13 per cent. Within this group, news reports are the largest class of program in New York (4.3 per cent), while special events and features are the largest class of program in both Los Angeles (9.4 per cent) and New Haven (8.5 per cent). Domestic information is the second largest group of information programs, with about 5 per cent in each city.

Information of a general sort for the audience as a whole amounts to about 2 per cent of all program time. This is an interesting class for it includes science information, which made up less than half of 1 per cent of the program time in New York (1953) and in Los Angeles (1952) and which was entirely lacking in New Haven. Information programs prepared for children range between 0.5 and 1 per cent of TV broadcasting time in the three cities.

The third segment of TV programming is orientation-type material, which as a whole amounted to 5.4 per cent of broadcasting time in New York (1953), 5.8 per cent in New Haven (1952), and 3.7 per cent in Los Angeles (1951). The largest of these classes in New York was religion with 1.7 per cent in 1953; in New Haven and Los Angeles, religion was less than 1 per cent. The largest class of orientation programming in New Haven and Los Angeles was public institutional programming, consisting largely of films provided free to the stations from the Armed Forces. This class of

program amounted to 3.4 per cent of all program time in New Haven, 1.6 per cent in Los Angeles, and 1.2 per cent in New York. The second largest class in all three cities was public issues programs in which there was either unilateral or multilateral discussion. Such programs amounted to about 1 per cent of all program time. Roughly similar quantities of personal-relations programs and preschool-entertainment programs were also present. There was no extensive presentation of public events in New York in 1953 nor in New Haven in 1952, but a trace of such programs was observed in Los Angeles in 1951.

An important aspect of the analysis of TV programs is the question of the social significance of acts and threats of violence. In the 1952 and the 1953 analyses of TV content in New York and the 1952 analysis in New Haven, the number of acts and threats, as well as the means and agents, of violence was observed for 85 per cent of the programming, no attempt being made to measure violence in sports, news, weather, public issues, and public events programs.

In the TV programs of seven stations observed for one week in 1952 in New York, there were 2,970 acts and threats of violence, or an over-all average of 5.8 acts or threats per hour. On one station in New Haven, there were 271 acts or threats of violence, or an average of 3.8 acts or threats per hour. In 1953 in New York, the total number of acts and threats increased 15 per cent over 1952, and the average rose from 5.8 to 6.2 per hour.

Entertainment-type programs in 1953 accounted for 98 per cent of all acts and threats. Drama itself contained 87 per cent of the total and averaged almost 10 acts or threats per hour. Crime drama alone had 28 per cent of all the acts and threats, while western drama had 23 per cent. The highest frequency of acts and threats of violence in the substantive subclasses, regardless of whether they were aimed at the general audience or the child audience, was in western drama where the average was 17.0 acts or threats per hour. Children's drama, as a whole, had more than three times the frequency of violent acts and threats in general audience drama. The highest average was for children's comedy drama (36.6 acts or threats per hour), followed by western drama (children)—23.6 per hour—with crime drama (children) having 6.0 per hour. Alto-

gether, in 1952, about one-fourth of the acts and threats were committed in a humorous context. In that year, for each class of drama and each type of program, humorous violence was more common in programs for children than in those designed for the general audience. About one-sixth of the acts and threats of violence were committed in the interest of "law and order." The proportion of "law and order" acts and threats was slightly higher in most program classes for programs aimed at children than in those for the general audience.

The hours when children might be expected to see most of their TV had proportionately more violence than the rest of the week in both 1952 and 1953. Over all, in 1953 there were 9.6 acts or threats per hour in the children hours as compared with 5.0 per hour in other hours. Entertainment-type programs contained twice as many acts and threats per hour in the children hours as in other hours. For information-type programs there were fewer acts and threats per hour in the children hours than in other periods of time.

Comparison of the twenty programs with the most favorable and twenty with the most unfavorable reviews (by five TV critics over a twelve-month period in 1952) with the twenty programs reported by *Pulse* to be most widely accepted by the viewing public indicates that the programs most liked by the public had a higher loading with acts and threats of violence than the whole of TV fare (8.6 as against 6.8 per hour). In variety programs rating high in audience acceptance the frequency of acts and threats of violence was three times as high as for all variety programs. The public likes its TV violence to be humorous, if we are to accept the implication of the fact that 36 per cent of all acts and threats of violence in programs most liked by viewers were in a humorous context, while this was true of only 25 per cent of the acts and threats in all programs. By the same token the public prefers its TV violence *not* to be in a "law and order" context.

IDENTIFICATION OF PROGRAMS WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

It will be noted that no mention of "educational" programs has been made in summarizing the TV content analyses. This is because "educational" is a term which describes *effects*, and our studies were restricted to *content*. It is loose thinking to assume that any par-

ticular kind of form or content in the media is educational *per se.* It is true, however, that certain aspects of the form and content of any kind of program might be said to be essential to the make-up of an "educational" program. It should have elements of continuity and progression from week to week. It should have emphasis on problem-solving. It should illuminate and integrate information and experience to the end that the viewer achieves an improved understanding of relationships in the real world. We were not equipped to determine whether these effects flowed from the programs monitored in TV content analyses made by the NAEB.

While "educational" effects cannot be presumed to flow from every program emanating from an educational institution, it is a common presumption that such effects are more probable from such programs. For this reason, the TV content analyses ascertained the number of programs identified with educational institutions. In New York there has been some increase in the number of such programs. Yet, even in 1953, only twelve programs were identified with educational institutions, which was one less than in 1952. None was found in Los Angeles in 1951 or in New Haven in 1952.

Up to the date of this writing, only one noncommercial TV station operated by an educational institution has begun to broadcast programs, and its programs have not yet been studied. The sole content on which it is possible to analyze TV programs, therefore, is that broadcast by commercial TV stations.

The Effects of Broadcast Programs

In considering the effects of broadcasting, it is desirable to point out that they should be thought of in relation to the effects of all the mass media of communications. The use of broadcasting service, like the use of printed and film media, has become a substantial phase of the lives of the American people, particularly the leisure-time portions of their lives. Knowledge of just how the media affect the lives of the population is still a tantalizing frontier of knowledge, inviting exploration. Let us proceed from the more certain pieces of knowledge outward toward this frontier.

The most certain effect of broadcasting, in a literal sense, is that it has made a deep penetration into our lives, as evidenced by our acceptance of it as an institution. In February, 1953, virtually all of

the approximately forty-two million homes in the United States had at least one radio receiver and about half of the homes had a TV set. At this point there were authorized by the FCC a total of 2,529 AM stations, 627 FM stations, and 314 TV stations. In addition, there were pending with the FCC requests for 246 AM, 12 FM, and 791 TV stations. If all these applications should eventually be approved, and if none of the present stations left the air, this would mean a total of 4,519 stations.[4]

Quite apart from the psychological effects of broadcasting programs, it is apparent that a large and growing share of our material and human talents is being drawn into the service of radio and TV. The capital invested in radio and TV receiving sets is now of the order of ten billion dollars. One might add the investment in stations, in equipment manufacturing plants, in distributive and service organizations. A rough estimate would place the over-all total investment between fifteen and twenty billion dollars. Total expenditures for time and talent in 1952 were about half a billion dollars for TV and slightly more for AM and FM combined, making a total of more than one billion dollars. In addition to this, the total annual cost of running our broadcast system would include the cost of electric power used, service calls and replacement parts, and the depreciation on equipment.

The population spends time as well as money on broadcast service. It is possible to predict that tomorrow between 60 and 80 per cent of some 21 million TV sets and that some 20 per cent of 90 million radio sets will be turned on. The average number of hours of viewing per home for TV is currently running above 5 per day, which for 21 million TV sets adds up to a total of about 100 million viewing hours per day for one or more viewers. For radio there is an average of about 3 hours of listening per home, or a total of 120 million hours per day of home listening by one or more persons. Radio and TV combined, therefore, account for some 220 million hours of reception per day in American homes. One should think of this broadcasting activity as serving many different audiences for different kinds of programs. There is no homo-

[4] The inference is not warranted that the number of different ownerships of broadcast stations has multiplied accordingly. There are still as many newspaper owners as there are nonnewspaper-owned broadcasting enterprises.

geneous "mass audience" of listener-viewers to different kinds of programs at different times of the day.

These gross effects are not spread evenly across the population. In geographic terms radio-set ownership is fairly evenly spread through urban parts of the population, while rural homes lag behind urban homes, and the South lags behind the rest of the country. In the case of TV sets, the existing ownership in 1953 is highly concentrated in large cities. At the time the TV freeze was lifted in the spring of 1952 at least six cities had reached the point where three out of four families owned TV receivers, and the seven largest TV cities had a total of almost half of all TV homes. As new stations go on the air, the saturation of TV sets (both UHF and VHF) will begin to climb in the smaller cities and in rural areas. The principal limiting factors to the starting of new TV stations in such regions will be the large investment required for TV stations, the large amount of advertising needed to support them, and the capacity of the telephone industry to supply the common carrier service for network programs, either by co-axial cable or radio-relay. Nevertheless, within the next year or so several hundred additional TV stations are likely to be on the air and the bulk of them will be in communities not now well served by TV. Meanwhile, TV-set saturation in existing TV communities will grow. It is probable that by January, 1954, TV sets will be in 95 per cent of the homes in Los Angeles, 91 per cent in New York, and 80 per cent or more in nineteen other cities.

The kind of people who buy TV sets first in a community are different in important respects from those who do not. They have larger families than non-TV pioneers (about 3.7 persons per family as against 3.0). They have higher incomes (mean family incomes of $4,490 as against $3,846 in New York in 1951). They are more often in the age bracket where home-building is substantial (more than one-third of the heads of TV homes in New York were between 30 and 39, as against one-fourth for non-TV homes). They have more high-school graduates but fewer college graduates than non-TV homes. They have more automobile ownership, more refrigerator ownership, and more telephone installations than non-TV homes. But, paradoxically, one-fourth of the TV homes (in New York and in New Jersey) do not have telephones in them.

The effects of radio and TV on the use of people's time must be understood in relation to the perceptual functions they involve. Radio requires only the attention of the ear, and often only its incidental attention at that: your eyes and body may be reading, doing housework, or washing the car. Television requires the attention of both eyes and ears and, therefore, immobilizes the body from activities which require substantial attention from the eyes. These facts give significance to the statement that, apparently in TV homes, TV viewing is the largest single use made of time, apart from working and sleeping.

In the aggregate, TV sets now draw a larger share of the total radio-TV audience in the evening from 9:00 to midnight than does radio. By the spring of 1952, TV was being viewed by 56 per cent of the combined audience, while radio was being listened to by 44 per cent. A year earlier their positions were reversed. In the early evening hours, 6:00 to 9:00 P.M., radio and TV shared the total audience evenly in 1952—51 per cent for radio and 49 per cent for TV. In the afternoon, from 3:00 to 6:00 P.M., radio had 62 per cent and TV 38 per cent of the combined audience. And as one looks back toward the morning hours, the share of radio increases and TV decreases. But the TV audience is increasing in even the morning hours when housewives are generally thought to be busy with housework; it trebled from 1951 to 1952 in the 6:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. period and doubled in the period from 9:00 A.M. to noon.

Studies of individual radio listening and TV viewing indicate that radio listening suffers an enduring loss of about one-fourth to one-third in homes which acquire TV sets. A greater decline in radio listening than this takes place when the TV set is first acquired, but within two years such families restore part of this radio listening through the use of radio during the early evening hours, and in listening to automobile radios in the late hours.

Available evidence, which is very scanty, seems to indicate that TV reduces motion-picture attendance sharply, perhaps by 50 to 75 per cent. But here the factors are different than in the case of competition between TV and other in-the-home activities. The difficulty of getting baby-sitters and of finding a downtown parking space is to be offset against the housewife's compulsive drive to

escape the confinement of the familiar house. For married couples in the stage where baby-sitters are a problem, as well as for young people in the courting stage, the drive-in theater, in competition with TV, offers the opportunity of escape from the home. The effect of TV on reading of newspapers, magazines, and books is not yet known.

The possible range of such institutional effects of radio and TV is as broad as our social organization, for these are major instruments of communication. Thus, one might consider their effects on the structure of business organization and the effects of radio and TV advertising themselves. For it is by now established that radio and TV advertising *can* increase for a time the sales of particular goods and services. For example, after a six months intensive (fifteen TV spot announcements per week) advertising campaign in Syracuse, New York, in 1951-52, tea consumption in TV homes increased by 19 per cent while in non-TV homes there was a nominal decrease in tea consumption. Before the advertising, the persons in 20 per cent of the TV homes "disliked" tea; after it, only 13 per cent did. Before the advertising, persons in 20 per cent of the TV homes said they liked tea; after it, 38 per cent did. In non-TV homes there was practically no change in attitude.

Leaving now the area of social effects, this chapter should close with consideration of what is known about the process by which radio and TV affect the individual. Because radio and TV are mass media, we need not duplicate the general statement of theory given in chapter vi. The effects of the several media in any given situation apparently depend on the nature of the material presented. It has also been shown that aural communication (as in radio) results in more retention of simple and brief information than does communication by eye alone (as in the printed media). Likewise communication by ear and eye together produces more retention of simple, brief information than does the use of either method alone. These generalizations do not cover TV, for controlled experiments that might yield such results have not been reported.

The effects of radio and TV on each individual are very complex. Changes in the individual's behavior result from tensions or needs in his immediate psychological field—that is, the interaction of his external environment, his internal psychological state, and

his past experiences. New causes of instability (such as tonight's radio and TV programs) create new tensions which in turn result in action in the direction of more stability. And, since human beings are resilient individuals, a change introduced in the psychological field tends to be absorbed in a manner which will produce the smallest change in the individual's personality. For example, the antisemitic person is able to perceive the protolerance message in a TV program as not applying to himself or as having some meaning other than what was intended.

Since we are constantly being frustrated in goal achievement, the failure to obtain a reduction of tension leads to a variety of behaviors. Some of these are looked on as good for the individual, as when we exert unusual effort to overcome frustration. For example, when we work harder to obtain the object we admired in the TV show. Others are maladaptive, such as when we retreat from reality and live in a dream world (this process is known as autism). Losing one's self in a mystery story or a soap opera has this effect on some people. Such "escape" temporarily reduces tensions, but it evades rather than achieves an adjustment to the tension-producing instabilities in the field. Likewise, neurotic solutions to tension states temporarily reduce tensions but at the cost of actions which we "know we shouldn't do," that is, by trying to live by moral standards not acceptable to our consciences.

It is clear that scores of different reactions in hundreds of different degrees of intensity for millions of viewers and listeners may result from a single episode in next Monday's performance of your favorite TV or radio program. And we are a long way from having "ratings" on these effects of radio and TV.

To return, finally, to some of the obvious questions suggested by the foregoing summary of the content of broadcast programs, we consider several of the broad questions (hypotheses) which relate not only to an individual but to *all* individuals who live in our society. One such question relates to the violence in radio and TV. It is contended that even if the portrayal of violent action doesn't lead children to commit crimes, it brutalizes and degrades them. The available evidence does not indicate that a well-functioning child is moved to commit a crime by a radio or TV program. Such results probably take place only where the child's

psychological or social status is pathological, even without the excuse of seeing or hearing the act via broadcasting. The issue of the degrading effects of violence in the mass media raises the question of the effect of violence in the fairy tales of the past millenia. The answer might be that violence in the fiction given to children does have some survival value. Perhaps the role of a storyteller, whether he is a medieval minstrel or a TV producer, is to prepare children for life as adults through stories which present adult reality in somewhat diluted strength. The violence in stories is often stylized and abstracted from the blood-and-thunder reality in ways which make it *relatively* nonthreatening to the child's mind. Perhaps our radio and TV violence serves to innoculate our children against the greater shock which maturity may present them in the violence of the real world. This, however, is not to say that a weaker innoculation might not be desirable.

Some of the widespread concern over the effect of violence on radio and TV may be a search for a scapegoat. Parents, the argument runs, feel guilty about the amount of violence and corruption which exists in the world, yet they feel powerless to do anything effective about it. Frustrated in their desire to reduce their tensions, they get rid of their guilt feelings and frustration by blaming TV and radio for reflecting even a small part of the real world's violence to their children.

Another kind of effect of broadcasting on individuals may be of great importance. This is the effect of the *omission* of certain kinds of possible programming from the daily broadcast fare. When the leisure time of individuals is saturated with the content of our present radio and TV, it is obvious that the same individuals are deprived of whatever kinds of possible programming are excluded from this fare. This might be called the *preclusive* effects. Examples are easy to give; their meaning is another problem. For instance, as noted above, the TV and radio program content virtually ignores the whole areas of literature, and the Fine Arts (other than music). Such culturally valuable material has not been regarded as attractive for commercial sponsorship. Whether, under our system of broadcasting, it *can* be included in our broadcast fare without diluting its uniqueness, its artistic merit, is an unsettled question. The argument is strong that it cannot. The fact remains that it is presently

excluded.

Related to the preclusive effects of omitting certain *types* of program material are the preclusive effects of omitting certain themes and *styles* of presenting program material. While it has not been empirically measured, it is plausibly argued by David Riesman (in *The Lonely Crowd*) that today's radio and TV programs (and other media content as well) abound in authoritarian themes. The hero, especially in children's fare, is said commonly to be an invincible figure, closely identified with political and technological symbols of absolute authority. The underdog or the champion of the individual's freedom seldom is shown as winning *because* of these identifications.

Similarly, it is argued that the *style* of representation of characters and theme emphasizes physical externals and that the inwardness of character is seldom shown. The hypothesis would be that by repetition in program after program, day after day, the viewers and listeners will come to view themselves in similar terms. The importance of peer-group direction in the formation of tastes gives support to this process and receives support from it.

Communications scholars, including Professors Lazarsfeld and Merton, advance still another view of these preclusive effects. They call it the narcotizing dysfunctional effect of mass communications. This simply means that the audiences of our mass media may have their attention diverted *so much* to viewing and listening to mystery and soap-opera shows and other habitual favorite types of program that they are as effectively removed from the solution of family, neighborhood, municipal, state, national and world *social* problems as if they were doped in their nonsleeping hours. To the extent this is true, individuals are abdicating responsibility for decisions on these problems to impersonal authority symbols—" 'they' will decide it." To the degree that this happens, the individual relapses into anonymity and authority reigns unchallenged.

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SECTION III

WHAT THE SCHOOLS AND THE PUBLIC CAN DO ABOUT THE MASS MEDIA

CHAPTER X

The Classroom and the Newspaper

PER G. STENSLAND

The Classroom as Part of the World

One of my friends tells a story about a little girl who asked her parents at the breakfast table what an atomic bomb is. The young parents feel that they must give a fair and honest picture of the horrors of war. They do a good job of describing the devastation, the incredible destruction, the frightening results of an atomic bomb attack. They equal John Hersey in the description of the events at Hiroshima. When the story and the breakfast are finished the little girl is asked, "Do you understand?" She looks up and says, "Yes, Daddy, I want one."

We laugh or smile at the innocence of this child. She does not know what an atomic bomb is. She does not know how to speak the language of the atomic age. She does not have any feeling of responsibility for using atomic power. But her lack of sophistication is only a matter of degree. While she lacks knowledge, we do too; while she is illiterate in communicating about the bomb, we are too, to a slightly lesser degree; while she is irresponsible about the use of the bomb, we may also be irresponsible. One thing we have in common with the girl at the breakfast table is that we all live in a world in which atomic bombs are realities.

In our public education system it is important to remember that *the public character of the classroom or the seminar or the reading library puts certain demands on education.* At times we forget that the student in our classroom is a member of the public, present or future. Since that is the case, our teaching needs to focus, at times more specifically than we care to have it, on the public problems outside the classroom walls.

To fill his role as a mature member of society, the citizen must meet three special needs.

The first is *the need for knowledge,* not just the need for facts about atomic power or flood control or tidelands, but knowledge of the *sources* of facts. The citizen needs not only to know facts but also to comprehend that the forces deciding our use of atomic power are made up of both facts and opinions. The little girl at the breakfast table certainly wanted to know about the atomic bomb, but she could not possibly understand what the story meant. When we ask for knowledge as one of the important results of good teaching about the world outside the classroom, we need to add that the students must also acquire abilities to interpret and evaluate the knowledge.

The second is *the need to communicate intelligently.* Three simple questions are involved in this communication. One concerns the communicator: Who is talking? The second concerns the reasons for the communication: What are his motives? The third concerns the utility of the communication: What does it mean in my life and my work?

Some time ago our four-year-old soap-opera fan had chapped knees. It was winter, so her mother made it clear that she had to wear leggings when she went out to play. Quite reasonably our daughter answered, "But mother, I don't get chapped knees from the cold. I am afraid it is because I let a lesser soap touch my skin." This story gets a tolerant laugh in a group of adults. We have grown up from that kind of trustful swallow-it-all attitude. We know that there are a dozen or more soaps that are equally soft and nonirritating. We have had the opportunity to try out many of them.

But once we move from soap to the things we cannot try out, look at, and place where they belong, we grownups turn out to be as naively uncritical as the little girl with the chapped knees.

The radio announces that Malenkov is the new premier of Soviet Russia. One commentator says one thing about the change; another says the opposite. Can we test the conflicting claims? Can we look at this event as easily as we look at an article of merchandise? Where do we put this piece of communication? How is it to be used? The students in our classroom will need not just skills to read the news

about Stalin's death but ability to make wise judgment about what is communicated and why. The public character of the classroom puts that demand on teaching.

The third requirement of acceptable citizenship is the *need for discrimination in the cultivation of attitudes and the choice of values.* Many years ago, when the citizens of the Massachusetts Bay Colony instituted public schools to instruct the young, they did so to frustrate "ye old deluder Satan." Satan is more ingenious in our times than he was then. Few question the place of public education in the development of democratic citizens. Few doubt that schools and colleges play an important role in education for democracy. But we need in our times, not just general commitment to democracy, general awareness of freedom and responsibility, but *specific attitudes, awareness of specific values.*

Much of the knowledge we can now pass on to future citizens is only momentarily valid. What we can do is to give them a point of view on knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge. The particular kind of skill to communicate and to co-operate is also only momentarily valid. In his life after graduation, the student needs wise judgment about the ever changing process of communication. The kind of democratic ideals we can impart to the student are of little value unless they can be translated into consistent actions.

This, then, is a case for introducing into "that part of the world which is the classroom" the news from the rest of the world.

The Newspaper Is a Window to the World

Our students can never experience the world directly. As Schramm and others have pointed out in earlier chapters of this volume, the world comes to the student chiefly through words. *The daily communicator of such words to the community* on the other side of the window *is the newspaper.* To use the phrase "the living textbook" may be trite, still that is the only textbook that many of us have as adults. Any discussion of presidential elections in the 1952 classroom that neglected the drama of 1952 seems strangely theoretical. Any discussion in an English class about the meaning of words is esoteric unless it uses the daily examples of changing and varying interpretation of words like *socialism, free enterprise, warmonger, success.*

The particular textbook that the newspaper is, however, has qualities differing from the usual ones. The newspaper daily transmits information, daily weaves the stuff out of which knowledge is made. But our students and we ourselves reach little understanding merely by absorbing this information in sponge-like fashion. In the newspapers, more than in the usual textbooks, we need to sift and select; we need to take part in deciding our own "lesson." As Peterson has pointed out (chap. iii), an increasing number of American communities now have only one newspaper, many only one radio station and that owned by the newspaper. In such communities, maybe more than in others, it is important that students in schools and colleges be alert enough to discriminate, to choose.

Schramm (chap. vi) has emphasized the point that communication is a two-way affair. We tend to forget this in the case of the daily textbook, the newspaper. While you cannot talk back individually to the newspaper, you can most certainly weigh it, discuss it, and eventually exercise some effect on its policies. If newspaper communication is a two-way affair, schools and colleges must make the readers able to do their part of the communicating. The very character of newspaper reading makes it doubly important to develop judgment and discrimination.

If the public classroom has been instituted to counteract the "old deluder Satan," then the newspaper available to the public is *the daily testing ground for the values* in the big battle. It is in the *New York Times* and the *Salina Journal,* in the *Amarillo Globe-News* and the *Christian Science Monitor* that we get the daily pictures of values in the community. Are these daily pictures consistent with what students in our schools and colleges learn about the American heritage? If they are not, on what grounds are we forced to make a compromise? What should be our arguments for questioning the daily newspaper's value pictures? What can our students find in this great mirror of modern man that supports the tried ideals in American society?

In another sense, also, the newspaper is a daily testing ground for values. Consistent with democratic decision and action, it offers the reader *continuous opportunity to share ideas.* It also establishes in the students, provided that we give them an opportunity to read and discuss newspapers, a pattern of choosing their reading matter.

Should we not, in our schools and colleges, ask whether the patterns that students are now developing are consistent with effective citizenship? Should we not concern ourselves with the matter of taste in newspaper reading, when we show so many concerns about the matter of taste in art courses, music appreciation classes, and interior decoration? If the newspaper represents a world different from the world in the schoolroom or around the seminar table, do we not need to make great efforts to reconcile those worlds? This does not call for compromise, but it calls for a continuous use of the medium that provides us with material for evaluation and choice.

The Newspaper—a Tool in Democratic Society

"Everyone agrees that our democratic society needs a free and responsible press . . . to present truthful news, dynamic, constructive opinion, and to assert leadership," says Edward L. Bernays.[1] Some would go even further and say with Reston of the *New York Times* that "perhaps more than any other institution in the country, the newspapers and the press associations create the intellectual climate in which the nation lives."[2] Siebert (chap. ii) and Peterson (chap. iii) in this yearbook have added a series of specifications for this central role that the press plays in our society.

The teacher in a school, the leader in an agricultural extension group, the program chairman in a women's club, the instructor in an evening school, the librarian—all who are engaged in organized education—have a particular stake in what Arthur Schlesinger calls "an environment for free and responsible discussion." It seems fair to suggest that the newspaper enables the educator to meet certain demands for "free and responsible discussion," demands put upon us once we chose a democratic form of government.

First, democracy exists on the assumption that "the test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market," as Justice Holmes once put it. The educator works in the market place—and if the market place is running into troubles

[1] Edward L. Bernays, *Public Relations Problems of the American Press*, p. 2. Survey delivered before the Twenty-second Annual Convention of the National Newspaper Promotion Association, 1952. New York: National Newspaper Promotion Association, 1952.

[2] James B. Reston, *Are American Newspapers Meeting Their Responsibilities?* p. 10. Columbus, Ohio: Walter Shepard Foundation, Ohio State University, 1952.

of restriction or monopoly or violent disturbance, he is as deeply involved as if he traded on the stock exchange or in the business market. The newspaper is a continuous ticker tape, telling the trends of the market. Half the people of the world cannot read. How much better off are the other half? Is the ability to communicate through the written word in newspapers just a social attribute, a convenience in getting around, a vocational asset? Or is it a qualification for membership in a world community, with heavy responsibilities as well as extensive benefits?

The answer is: We *are* concerned with the market place of free thought, we, the students and teachers in schools, the members of adult-education groups, the participants in workshops, institutes, courses—all engaged in an organized pursuit of learning to take charge of their future, as Edgar Dale avers. *The first responsibility—once we are given the tremendous asset of the daily written communication—is to watch continuously what is going on in the market place of ideas.* If we demand access to news outside the classroom walls, we should demand it inside those walls, too.

Second, tradesmen can run into trouble if they just watch what goes on and follow the first hunch. Our social intercourse depends on better and better communications. Our democratic social action depends on wiser and wiser choice among ideas that are communicated. If "without free speech and assembly, discussion would be futile," as Justice Brandeis said, the corollary has to be that all of us need *the skill to use* free speech and assembly. Better communications and wiser choice require preparation. And freedom of the press (and of assembly) become empty words, unless we develop *freedom of readership and participation.* Such freedom is irresponsible, unless it is based on judgment, appraisal, consistency. *The second responsibility of educators, then, is to present opportunities by which citizens (and future citizens) can prepare themselves to trade wisely in the market of ideas.*

There is a special angle to this preparation demand. It is easy to criticize a newspaper. But criticism is fruitless, nay, unaccountable, unless the reader is prepared to take his part in the communication process. Why should a blind man complain about the bad quality of a TV receiver set? Why should I get upset about the price of a book in Arabic if I do not read Arabic?

These two demands, one for access, the other for skill to use, flow out of the very nature of our democratic society. The argument here is that the newspaper is particularly well fitted to meet both these demands. But, quite aside from democracy, our present modes of living present certain general demands which give the press a unique role. Modern society builds to an amazing degree on specialized knowledge and skill. The countless gears and gadgets, machines and methods that surround us all spring from an immense diversification and specialization. We might even with Lyman Bryson argue that "the next America" will present us with only one important personal opportunity for free choice. We may, in that next America, have less and less opportunity for political and economic democracy, more and more for cultural democracy. But this one field for personal choices is open to us through an infinite division of labor, a system of mass production, both built on specialized skill and knowledge.[3]

The continued health of society, though, calls for more than specialists and specialties. It calls for channels among the many who "know a lot about very little." It calls for integration among the fields of expertness. Whether or not we advocate general education, our own diverse living forms call for common ground. The newspaper presents such a common ground. It acts, if you please, as an integrator. It places the specialized knowledge and the narrow interests in larger perspective. Where else would you every day find, in the space of some few pages, within the reading time of some few minutes, announcement of the death of a foreign dictator as well as of the oldtimer in your neighborhood, the birth of a new age in the Nevada desert as well as of a new department store downtown? This is no flip advertisement for newspapers—it is a plea for integration somewhere in our daily lives, so dangerously fractioned and scattered.

Of course, the plea for integration puts the burden equally on writers and readers. The newspaper *should*, we say, present the common ground for the many forces and folks in society. The reader *should* visit that common ground to keep perspective and balance.

So, *the third responsibility placed on educators by the char-*

[3] Lyman Bryson, *The Next America.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1952.

acter of the world we live in is to present the citizens with continuous opportunities to compare and combine, to form the unity of the many. This is not to suggest that the press is the only unifier and integrator—rather that the press is the daily common ground, where we may and often do find the unity and integration we need.

The Newspaper—a Tool in the Education of Citizens

There are some natural ties between the classroom and the editor's desk. We often fail to see them in our search for textbooks, study guides, and discussion outlines.

First, the newspaper is an *information source.* We want the student to use the storybook, the text, the encyclopedia, the library, to get information. With all its necessary limitation, the newspaper is there to inform the public. In a course and a curriculum it should exist side by side with other resources to inform, to reinforce, and still more, to give variety.

Second, the newspaper is an *example of observing, reporting, interpreting.* Education in schools, colleges, and other agencies is concerned with the skills and habits of study and attention. The teacher and the study leader seek to develop the ability of the class or groups to find the meaning of things and to report and interpret what they are seeing. This manifold ability is demonstrated every day in a newspaper. The daily story of story-writing should be a powerful reinforcer to what goes on in the classrooms.

Third, the newspaper has *the appeal of dealing with things now and here.* Since the teacher or study leader is concerned with "starting where the students are" and "building on existing interests," he needs timely materials, matching those slowly and massively built by our past. In a history course, we need history today; in an art or music course, not only museums, concerts, and phonograph records but also the reports on art and music today. In science we need the ever changing textbook of today's scientific progress. The newspaper is the record of today and here. Again, it acts as reinforcing material by presenting what is close to the students in time and space.

Fourth, the newspaper presents *the challenge of balance.* In our education system we give great attention to forming the habit of balanced diet, balanced health habits, balance between fun and play.

Faced with what Harry Overstreet calls "the daily diet of disaster," we need to pay heed to a balanced newspaper diet. What good is preaching sound intellectual diet, if we daily learn (by least resistance or through absence of advice) to skim the headlines, flip the pages to the comic strips, or read only the sport page or racing schedule? Why strive to win the world of books or great literature when you lose your soul daily in messy newspaper habits?

Fifth, the newspaper presents *the daily opportunity for personal choice.* The cultural democracy which Bryson envisions in *The Next America* is built, to a large extent, on freedom to choose our own personal combination of goods and articles available through mass production and mass communication. But freedom of choice in the field of fabrics, food, and fun could end in vulgarity and cheapness without the safeguard of broad and wise consumer education. Consumer education is as important to readers as it is to food buyers and household shoppers. If we educate for preference based on thought and thrift in the business world of things, why not in the business world of ideas?

Sixth, the newspaper brings *daily drama* to courses of study and discussion meetings. In ordinary classroom teaching, many of the principles and forces studied get dramatic illustration in the newspaper. It is a fair assumption that teachers and professors of government classes in the autumn of 1952 had greater chances (and incentives) to make their courses lively and dramatic than a couple of years earlier. What would lessons and courses about Asia look like without reference to the immediate explosive events which may be in Korea, Indo-China, and India today and in other places tomorrow? A court trial is reported in a newspaper, and the student of sociology, law, literature, and psychology has a daily lesson added to the one in the textbook.

Seventh, the newspaper presents a *laboratory for American enterprise.* On the one side, there is a demonstration of how the human element influences an enterprise. The class or the study group looking at the choices involved in producing this or that news story, this or that combination of reading material, is on the way to a more mature look at other materials presented in the education program. What of the textbook, the lecture, the film, the demonstration? Are they not all products of a human choice? Are they not all

open to a reflective appraisal—more mature than either acceptance or rejection?

On the other side, here is a daily demonstration of American business enterprise. As teachers of the citizens of today and tomorrow we want and need realistic understanding of what makes our world of economic forces tick. The newspaper is a continuous exemplification of stresses and strains in American economic society. While reporting on what is happening in business and industry, it presents a daily picture of choice in business and industry. Why was this story played up, that story neglected? What decisions lay behind the form and content of this particular page, section, issue of today's paper? What is the difference between an American daily newspaper and a British, Swedish, or Russian newspaper? Is the difference a sign of difference in enterprise? skill? culture?

Here then, in review, are the seven everyday ties between the newspaper and the blackboard, between the editor and the educator:

1. The newspaper is a source of information.
2. The newspaper is an example of observing, reporting, interpreting.
3. The newspaper has the appeal of dealing with things now and here.
4. The newspaper presents the challenge of balance.
5. The newspaper presents the daily opportunity for personal choice.
6. The newspaper brings daily drama to courses of study and discussion meetings.
7. The newspaper presents a laboratory for American enterprise.

There are other ties, maybe more important. With these ties in mind, though, let us look at some of the possible ways in which the press can be tied functionally to what we are trying to do in our education programs.

Studying the Newspaper

Let us suppose that a school class or a discussion group of adults has decided to study the newspaper. Whether they are young people or grownups, they need to look at it as an enterprise that they might be engaged in themselves. It is easy to talk in general terms about how a newspaper is made and, after the discussion, resume the old ways of thinking about the press. The study needs to carry over into specific understandings. For example, anyone who tries to understand the press needs to realize in a personal fashion

that the newsmen write for buying readers. They gear themselves to a reading public. They do not write to everyone, but to someone. The newspapers take character from the readers.

From that personal starting point, a group of young people or adults should frankly recognize the fact that newsmen have opinions like other human beings. They cannot be absolutely objective in matters about which there are different opinions. Also, like others, journalists do some slovenly thinking. They observe with inaccuracy. They use words that mean one thing to them, another to us. Like others, they judge a story against the background of their own experience. Newsmen, like newsreaders, have their own preferences and prejudices. So, somehow, the readers need to study the press, much as they would study themselves.

There is another common ground between newsmen and newsreaders. As several authors in this yearbook have pointed out, the press, its freedom, and its responsibilities should be matters of deep concern to all citizens of a democracy. What happens to news is not entirely up to newsmen, it is up to the readers, too.

What's News? Take today's paper—and it does not matter whether it is the metropolitan *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, or the local Borger (Texas) *News Herald*. What news stories appeared on the front page? What was news to the editor when he received the wires or the stories from the reporters on the beat? Why were these particular stories selected for the front page?

Suppose you were an editor in our town. Which would you select among the following headlines for the front page, and which news would you drop entirely?

ATOMIC WEAPONS TO BE TESTED ON RANGE IN NEVADA
FISH CATCHES FISHERMAN
ANTI-BRITISH RIOTS IN CAIRO
CANCER DIAGNOSIS WRONG, GIRL, 4, WON'T LOSE EYE
CAPTAIN EDDIE RICKENBACKER'S SON JOINS AIR FORCE
COLLEGE BASEBALL COACHES WANT FRESHMEN ELIGIBLE
POPE BARS CLERGY FROM MEMBERSHIP IN ROTARY CLUBS
NEW TOBACCO STRAIN THAT RESISTS VIRUS DEVELOPED
BOY, 4, LEADS YOUNGER SISTER TO SAFETY FROM BURNING HOUSE
COLLEGE RADIO STATION RESUMES BROADCAST
O.K. RELIGIOUS TV PROGRAM
GRANT FOR ASIAN STUDY

Three of these stories appeared in the autumn of 1951 on page 1 in a metropolitan newspaper. Three of the headlines above were found in a city paper in the same region, but the stories never appeared in the metropolitan newspaper. What would be your choice? Could it make any difference *when* these stories came to the editor's desk, *what had come before, what other stories* competed with these?

A high-school class studying the press might profitably use as material for an opening session the front pages for a week of one of the daily newspapers in their own town and compare them with the front pages of the *New York Times School Weekly* for the same week. Divided into groups, the students should discuss the difference in selection of news between their own paper and the *New York Times.* They should make their own tentative list of reasons for the selection in either case. They should ask themselves for what readers the two papers wrote.

Gragg has suggested that a high-school class subscribe to a number of newspapers for an assigned period and carry on the analysis of the newsman's yardstick through a period of weeks.[4] This yardstick is a product of policy decisions. Writings by Dale, Bernays, and Reston offer many suggestions as to what makes the yardstick.[5]

The preceding sections of this yearbook also comment on the newsman's decisions. A high-school student group may make a special point of comparing their own yardstick with the suggestions made by these experts. For comparison they might take a look at their own high-school paper. In that school paper, would these benchmarks be valid?

1. The newsman rates high stories about people.
2. News that concerns the whole community is important to the newsman.
3. The newsman is interested in news that touches on the very fortunes of his readers.

[4] Richard K. Gragg, "How to Read the Newspaper: A Resource Unit for the Senior High School," *Illinois English Bulletin* (Urbana, Illinois), XL (December, 1952).

[5] Edgar Dale, *How To Read a Newspaper.* Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1941.

4. With varying emphasis, newspapers are concerned with conflict, crisis, and disaster—because they know their readers want drama.
5. Newspapers have "axes to grind," special viewpoints to get across, and "policies."

These considerations underlie the immediate decision of an editor to select a story. They operate continuously when he or his writers give the story its special treatment. Swanson (chap. vii) has outlined the many separate decisions that have to be made with reference to determining whether or not a story is news. The study group should here be guided into a discussion not only of the simple decision on *what's news* but also to an analysis of *how much* a story is news. For example, the sequence and the step-by-step communication in a news story should come alive to those studying the press. It can be done with cartoons. It can be done with actual examples of the news story as it appears at various stages of the game.

One of the projects in a high-school class could be, with the help of the local newspaper, to gather actual examples of the text for a particular court case that has aroused the interest of the town's people. How did the first copy look? What did the re-write man do about it? How did a city editor change the story, if he did so? What happened on the front page? The students would be given the assignment to talk with the reporter, the re-write man, the city editor, and the main editor about their particular reasons for doing this or that to the story.

The change in a news story can be dramatized in a discussion group through other means, of course. In Kansas, the home demonstration extension units in twenty-seven counties have carried out a project on "You and the News." The four-hour discussion session was introduced with a dramatization of what might happen to a news story when it travels from the street corner where a murder is committed, through the eye-witness, the reporter, the editor, and on to the reader. For discussion purposes, the group was divided into huddles of eight to ten each, and the participants produced their lists of forces that played a role in a news story. Background, environment, education, previous experiences, interest, the job, the circumstances at the moment—all these factors, the groups decided, have their bearing on what's news and how much it is

news. In these discussions—and the scheme of the Kansas home demonstration units can be adopted by other adult groups—the main point was to engage the participants in an experience which made *the travel of a news story come alive.* A reader should be induced to think as though he were the producer of a news story. Only then can the expert newsman's yardstick make sense.

After this opening analysis of what's news, the class or the group is ready to go to the question of what makes such items news.

Why Things Are News. It is obvious that events and ideas are news with reference to two persons, the reader and the newsman. Under varying circumstances, the yardstick that the newsman uses will change. To an editor, a particular piece of information is rated as news when it is timely, when it has significance to the local readers, when it is of general importance in society, when human color and character are involved, and when the whole thing is dramatic. But if he looks at this same piece of information in another place and at another time, local or general significance, timeliness, human interest, and drama look different. Why *are* things news?

A clue lies in what a newspaper should stand for. Suppose the class or group considers at this point the choices which Swanson reported in chapter vii. Let every member rate these in terms of priority:

1. The newspaper should keep people informed.
2. The newspaper should be decent and in good taste.
3. The newspaper should print both sides.
4. The newspaper should be accurate.
5. The newspaper should be free.
6. The newspaper should be easy and interesting to read.
7. The newspaper should make a profit.

Does it make any difference what priority the items have in the list just given? How would cost and sales volume influence the decision on timing? If a particular story has appeared one day, what would be the reasons for following through with a second story, a series of articles?

The reader often forgets that the newsman is in business and that he is employed by a publisher who is also a businessman. In the discussion in chapter vii, a number of reading patterns are re-

ported. What do all these patterns mean to the businessman who happens to own the newspaper? Here the group could profitably compare an issue of the *New York Daily News* and the *New York Times*, or the *Los Angeles Examiner* and the *Los Angeles Daily Times*. Are there some special considerations that lead the *Daily News* in New York to play up the human-interest and drama angles more than the *New York Times?* Is the difference due only to the difference in reading public? Is it possible to keep this difference alive because Los Angeles and New York are big cities? What should be the wise decision about the yardstick in a city where you have only *one* newspaper?

The answer lies in this paradox that things are news to a newsman because they are important enough to the reader to buy. Again, the class studying this problem should discuss the tremendous power that the newspaperman has as a seller, especially if he produces the only newspaper in town. If you have been in the habit of buying a newspaper every day, what happens if you find that it no longer suits your taste? Is it your decision not buy a newspaper any more? Is it your decision to try to get news over TV or radio? Is it to shift your subscription or purchase to another paper, maybe in another town? These questions all lead to an analysis of why people read newspapers. It leads to the question, does it matter what people read?

The Kansas extension groups easily discovered that people read newspapers, not just out of habit, but because they have personal reasons for doing it. In a rural county, a leader group of fifty farm women suggested (in this order of importance) that they read newspapers daily to keep abreast of the times, to broaden their own understanding of the world, to look after their own interests (and here the ads and market reports are especially important), to find out what experts think, to hear the other side, and to carry out their responsibility in the community. Another group of seventy-five club members in Wyandotte County, close to Kansas City, decided (in this order) that it was important to read newspapers to broaden viewpoints and break prejudices, to strengthen the democratic process, to gain education, to satisfy an intellectual habit, to keep abreast of the times, and for entertainment.

This leads the class or group to a discussion of *how much it*

matters what citizens read and why they do it. The group should look again at the list of reasons for printing news and at the list of expectations (pp. 228-30). Evidently there are gaps between what people think the newspaper should do and why they think they read newspapers. Do these gaps have any influence on the character and quality of the daily newspaper? In a high-school class, a sensible project would be to take a poll among the students on reasons why they read the high-school paper, and some days later another poll on what they think the high-school paper should do. There are many points at which these two lists of reasons and expectations differ. The discussion should be aimed at clarifying how these differences may influence the quality and character of the paper.

The readers, then, have two yardsticks that they use: one giving their standards and expectations, the other revealing their reasons for reading. These two yardsticks should be compared with the newsmen's criteria: timeliness, local and general importance, human interest, drama. Where are there differences, if any?

The Importance of News. A couple of years ago Bernays inquired from the publishers of daily newspapers in the United States and from opinion leaders in representative groups in America what their attitudes were on the functions and responsibilities of the press. Had the press lived up to the ideals "aspired to and plotted by its leaders in the nineteenth century?"

Peterson (chap. iii) has discussed the way in which the American press has fulfilled what he calls the six functions. These functions are all intertwined with philosophical considerations. One way of getting at these philosophical considerations is to make a special point in a class or a group to look at early representative statements by American journalists. Three of these were used in the report by Bernays. We repeat them here.

Joseph Pulitzer made this statement as the Salutatory of the *New York World,* May 10, 1883:

> An institution that should always fight for progress and reform, never tolerate injustice and corruption, always fight demagogues of all parties, never belong to any party, always oppose privileged classes and public plunderers, never lack sympathy with the poor, always remain devoted to the public welfare, never be satisfied with merely printing news,

always be drastically independent, never be afraid to attack wrong, whether by predatory plutocracy or predatory poverty.[6]

When he took over *The New York Times*, August 18, 1896, Adolph S. Ochs said:

> It will be my earnest aim that *The New York Times* give the news, all the news, in concise and attractive form, in language that is permissible in good society, and give it early, if not earlier, than it can be learned through any other medium. To give the news impartially, without fear or favor, regardless of party, sect, or interest involved; to make the columns of *The New York Times* a forum for the consideration of all public questions of public importance, and to that end, to invite intelligent discussion from all shades of opinion.

Thomas Gibson said, in the *Rocky Mountain Herald*, Denver, Colorado, May 1, 1860:

> A newspaper untrammeled by sinister influence from any quarter—the advocate of the right and the denouncer of the wrong—an independent vehicle for the free expression of opinions of all candid, honest, and intelligent minds—a medium of free discussion, moral, religious, social, and scientific.

Add to these three statements Reston's analysis of the two great stories in the world today "that are missed to a large extent by the American newspaper": "One is the comparative success of American leadership in the world, and the other is the essential unity of the American people." The two stories are a kind of test case on how the American press is living up to its responsibilities, says this diplomatic correspondent to *The New York Times*. He suggests "that the headlines have certainly made the American people more conscious of our international failures than of our international successes and in the process of doing so have helped create a kind of pessimism in America which is not justified by the events of the past and may be dangerous to our success in the future."[7]

If we want to discuss the realism of these three early statements of the standards of newsmen and Reston's criticism, then it seems practical, first, to take a poll in the group or class on whether the three statements are valid today. If they are valid, how do they

[6] Bernays, *op. cit.*, p. 4 ff.

[7] Reston, *op. cit.*, p. 4 ff.

fit into our particular situation now? How about the leading newspaper in your town or city? Does it measure up to the standards set by Pulitzer, Ochs, and Gibson? Does Reston's criticism apply?

In the Bernays study, one out of four publishers felt that the press does not meet the ideals outlined in the three statements above. Of the group of opinion leaders, 44 per cent were of this negative opinion. Of all the newspapers in the country, only twelve were mentioned in a top-ten list, by either publishers or opinion leaders. This seems to mean that a small group of American newspapers are the only ones that seriously meet the challenge set forth by the journalist leaders of the last century.

Bernays went on to ask the publishers and the opinion leaders why and how they felt that the newspapers deviated from the ideals. Here a special study activity suggests itself, involving the students or group members in a discussion of the ways in which they think newspapers deviate from the ideals. After discussion (or maybe another poll), the group should take a look at the results of the Bernays survey: 42 per cent of the publishers and 55 per cent of the opinion leaders felt that the newspapers' most important deviations were political bias or slanting the news. The publishers were more inclined to stress political bias; the opinion leaders, slanting the news. One in five of the publishers suggested that the newspapers of today fail to perform a public service. Sensationalism was listed by 12 per cent of the opinion leaders, while no publisher listed this as an important deviation. Response to economic pressure was listed by 17 per cent of the publishers and 8 per cent of the opinion leaders.

The publishers mentioned deviations in this order of strength: failure to perform public service, response to economic pressures, slanting the news, political bias, all representing more than 10 per cent of the mentioned deviations. The opinion leaders listed slanting the news, failure to perform public service, sensationalism, political bias, and self-interest of the publisher, all representing more than 10 per cent of the total number of deviations.

What Can Be Done about All This? The figures above are important, as they reveal a widespread disapproval of the press on the part of both publishers and readers. As Bernays points out, publishers recognize some of the shortcomings "even more acutely than the public leaders." Obviously certain generally approved ideals

for the press are met by only a small number of newspapers.

It is at this point that the group studying newspapers should carefully consider what more the ordinary citizen can do than take a look at his own reading habits. Are citizens justified in trying to form themselves into advisory groups? Should readers engage themselves in a co-operative venture with newsmen, trying together to study and analyze the problem of the press in a democracy? Should organized groups of adults, such as women's clubs, parent-teacher associations, farm bureaus, labor unions, and chambers of commerce engage themselves in activities where they study the news-communication problem in their communities through comparisons between the local newspaper and some of the papers that now are listed as living up to the responsibility of the press (such as *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *St. Louis Post–Dispatch*, *Louisville Courier Journal*, *Washington Post*, and *New York Herald Tribune*)?

What about Reston's criticism? What would be some of the suggestions by the group with regard to his answer to what the press can do? First, he suggests that most newspapers should have special correspondents in Washington to ferret out the facts for the home town; second, he suggests that the partisan press is "one of the hangovers from another era which merely handicap us in our responsibilities to provide solid, impartial news and fair, hard-hitting criticism"; third, the press should have editorial writers who have had experience abroad; fourth, it is no longer effective "to write partisan editorials" which ignore "the complexity and dangers before the government"; fifth, it is no longer defensible "to print any violent accusation against any public officials regardless of any evidence offered." These five points may be the basis for a discussion rounding off the section on the importance of news in our society.

Once the readers are engaged in studying the newspaper, whether they are high-school or college students or adults, they need to realize that the discussion about the press is only one side of the coin. While they have been looking at the press they have also looked at the person behind the newspaper, sitting in the chair in the living-room—the reader. The next section will indicate the areas in which citizens need to consider discrimination in reading the newspaper.

Studying Ourselves—the Readers

"How to read a newspaper" is the theme of a number of guides developed by Dale in his book of that title,[8] by Milton Mayer in his *Harpers* article on *The Chicago Tribune*,[9] and by Stensland and Dennis in *Keeping Up with the News*.[10] As widely different media as the Kiplinger magazine, *Changing Times*,[11] and the *New York Herald Tribune*,[12] the Congregational Church magazine, *Social Action*,[13] and the *Illinois English Bulletin*[14] have suggested ways to understand the press. In all cases, there is the reader as the last link in the chain of *event-report-article*.

The reader is like a shopper before Christmas. When the Christmas shopper has something very special to buy, he finds the floor and section in the store that carries that particular merchandise. That is what the reader is doing when he goes to the sports page first of all, when he flips open the paper to the society news, or the comics, or the editorials. Here he is, the news shopper. He is on his way to get a book (review of a current best seller). He rushes past other counters with their displays (the headlines). He stops briefly at the sport-goods department to look at the new game equipment (the latest basketball scores on the sports page). He is slightly annoyed at the many aisles (pages) he has to go through to get to the book department. He will probably get there and find the book he wants, but he also might get side-tracked at the soda fountain (comics).

But a department store seldom has all the things he wants to

[8] Dale, *op. cit.*

[9] Milton Mayer, "How To Read the Chicago Tribune," *Harper's Magazine*, (April, 1949).

[10] Per G. Stensland and Larry Dennis, *Keeping Up with the News*. Life Adjustment Booklet. Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1951.

[11] "How To Read a Newspaper," *Changing Times*, March, 1950. Washington: Kiplinger Magazine.

[12] *How To Get the Most Out of Your Newspaper*. New York: New York Herald-Tribune, Inc., 1949.

[13] "What Every Newspaper Reader Should Know," *Social Action*, XV (May, 1949). New York: Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches.

[14] Gragg, *op. cit.*

buy. One day the shopper is out to buy a special pair of shoes. He finds a shoe store that carries more specialties than the department stores. That is why the reader does not go to a daily newspaper to get information on stamp collecting or interior decoration. He gets *Stamps* or *House Beautiful.*

On the other side of the counter stands the newsman. He displays his merchandise attractively (layout), some of it on the counters (headlines). The store features some of its merchandise in the street windows (the front page). The department-store owner (the publisher of a daily newspaper) has to balance his appeal—and see to it that the many customers (readers) get what they want. He may put on specials (features) and have sales (campaigns), but every day he has to satisfy his customers. Some store owners (publishers) cater to a demand for special merchandise (news). So they carry only automobiles or only hardware (*National Geographic Magazine* or *Wall Street Journal*).

Selections. The first mechanism that operates all the time is selection. The reader sifts and sorts what is news, even before he makes any effort to read and understand.[15] When schools or other education agencies want to teach discrimination in reading, they must take this into account.[16] Before one can learn to read with a clear brain and learn to understand what a newsman means by certain words, he has to be sufficiently motivated to select.

Take an informal rating poll of the news stories on today's front page in any group, and you will find that some stories rate high, some low. Some stories would definitely be read by the majority; others would definitely be skipped. Without going into the intricate psychological laws that operate behind selection, we may suggest that most readers are inclined to read: stories about people; news about things that involve everybody; items that touch immediate personal interest; and dramatic stories, dreams, romance.

These are four common reasons for our news reading. When Mrs. Jones says that she is interested in certain things and that some stories "capture her imagination" then her own mind actually has

[15] Geraldine Saltzberg, *Knowing Your Newspaper.* Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1953.

[16] Edgar Dale and Verna Spicer, *Newspaper Discrimination.* Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1942.

made some selection even before she opens the newspaper. As soon as Mr. Smith selects, he also neglects; as soon as he "gets a kick out of certain things," he also gets "bored stiff at other things." The reader more often selects those things that reinforce what he already believes in, as Schramm (chap. vi) has pointed out. The problem of education is to make it possible for the reader to take the first step of selection in spite of preferences, likes, and dislikes. Somehow, democratic education has to make the reader willing to select reading matter which might change attitudes and convictions.

Is it possible in a high-school class or a study group of adults to suggest a short period of experimentation with reading things that the students or group members do *not* like and would *not* select? For a week the class or the group could decide to read stories on the front page of the newspaper that they ordinarily would have skipped. After this week of reading things that they might not like or agree with, the class or the group should discuss this adventure in voluntary self-discipline. *To exercise true freedom of choice, readers need to avail themselves of all varieties of ideas.*

Power of the Word. The fragile tool for our communications with other human beings is the word, as other chapters of this yearbook have pointed out. The story of a murder on Main Street is built of words, said by an eye witness and heard by a bystander, written by a reporter-on-the-beat, read by an editor, re-written and printed by several persons in the newspaper office, and finally read by the reader. What is behind all those words? What is behind a word used in the beginning of this chain, compared to the same word used at the end of the chain? the same understanding? the same meaning?

In a study situation one may quickly illustrate the ease with which we change meanings of words. The instructor or the leader could use the old technique of showing a word on a flash card to the group and asking the members to write down what they think of. Take the words *labor, taxes, weekends, red.* There will be a variety of reactions to all these words. About some words, people differ more than about others. If it is so, what forces make us all look at even simple words and extract from them quite varying meanings? Fearing (chap. viii) has treated this problem in his discussion of varying reactions to motion pictures.

The group may pick a news column and each member underline words about which people differ in opinion, and then compare the lists. What words would the group find prejudicial and loaded in the following news item?

> The amazing Senator Grove is winding up his whirlwind tour of electrifying speeches to packed audiences. With unswaying force he is leveling well-aimed criticism at the boondoggling in our jittery administration. . . .

It is obvious that selection and semantics are closely tied together. When the reader selects a news story and his mind selects one of many meanings of a word, he is weaving the news story into a pattern that is already made—his pattern of prejudice and preference. It might even be right to suggest that the reader starts with a picture in his mind and fits the newspaper and the word to that picture. There are countless possibilities for imaginative teachers and study leaders to discuss what forces have been at work to form these pictures in the reader's mind. Rather than being extravagant excursions, such discussions hit right at the core of what we call discrimination in reading.

Often it is easier to discuss the pictures in other people's minds than those in your own. Let the class or the study group imagine two or three personalities with fairly distinct interests and backgrounds. Match these imagined readers with particular news stories on the front page. What is in their minds when they read the headlines listed on page 227? How do they react to a particular story about corruption in public office? What ideas come to their minds first when they see words like *communist, defense, economy, prisoner?*

The Human Error. All of us, readers and newsmen alike, set some traps for ourselves when we think, and they have all been pointed out by writers of textbooks of logic or psychology. They need to be kept in mind in any study or analysis of newspaper reading:

1. Too often we think that something is *either* this *or* that, rather than that it might be *both* or partly this *and* partly that.
2. We tend to generalize from what we *know* is true to what we *think* is true. Three blind men, describing the elephant, ended with one making the assertion that an elephant is "all hard and smooth" (the

tusks), the second claiming that an elephant is "all round and rough" (the legs), the third saying that all elephants are "long and curved" (the trunk). We often think like that.

3. We tend to *overcredit the person we know* (the man who is "one of us") *with being right,* to give him more importance because we know him.
4. Likewise, we tend to *discredit strangers, foreigners, and unfamiliar* things.
5. Sometimes we use *false logic,* skipping over one step of the argument. (Communists believe in socialized medicine. Mr. X believes in socialized medicine. *Therefore,* Mr. X is a communist.)
6. Too often we fail to distinguish between *facts* and *opinions about facts.* ("It is reported by a usually reliable source. . . .")

Several activities are suggested by this analysis of how we think as readers. An instructive enterprise would be to select a news columnist who is known for his particular points of view, like Fulton Lewis, Jr., Walter Lippmann, Marquis Childs, or Dorothy Thompson. The group should discuss the way these four news columnists reason, compare their interpretation with a straight news story or several news stories about the same problem. This comparative analysis would at least suggest ways of measuring news matter, for its quality as to consistency, logic, fairness, balance.

The Discriminating Approach to "Color." The last three sections have silently given admonitions to the reader: Don't get in a rut in your newspaper reading; take a look at those ideas and stories that you don't agree with! Watch the meaning you put into words; check your own "trigger reaction" to certain expressions! Keep on the outlook for those treacherous slips in thinking!

With all those admonitions in mind, with a determination occasionally to read more than one newspaper, with an eye for a balanced diet and sound intellectual food habits, the reader still has to be particular about that part of newspaper material that is meant to whip up emotions, to tease, tempt, and tickle his fancy.

The newspapers, as we know, contain legitimate "color" material: headlines, pictures, cartoons, personal columns. These are all as legitimate as the fancy wrapping on the Christmas gift, the flowers on a dinner table, or the chrome on the car. Nevertheless, as they are devised and used to attract attention, to point up certain specific features of a news item, they tend to overstress those

features. Here is a cartoon showing Casper Milquetoast in a quandary about buying one of four newspapers with the following banner headlines: "Has Russia the Atom Bomb?" "Kitten Makes Pal of Bulldog," "War Looms," "World Faces Chaos."

This cartoon not only tells the story about how newspaper headlines might overstress one part of the news for the day but also overpaints the picture of Mr. Milquetoast, the reader. Neither the headlines nor the cartoon give a "true picture" of the world or the situation. The situation, whether in the world or at the newsstand where Mr. Milquetoast is buying his paper, is, of course, tremendously complex. The headlines catch only one little glimpse out of one part of that complex picture called "the world today," and the cartoon catches only one angle of the situation at the newsstand.

Any program device to increase our ability to discriminate as readers should then, as a last point, take up the particular attention we need to pay to the oversimplified, the overstressed material that newspapers legitimately use. In some cases the headlines indeed are intentionally misleading. During the first Lattimore investigation, one of the Midwest dailies on March 31, 1950, carried a banner headline saying LATTIMORE A POLICY MAKER. Before the large letters there were printed in smaller type the two words, *Acheson denies.* Anyone reading the newspaper from a distance would, of course, get an entirely wrong picture of what this piece of news had to say.

The group engaged in newspaper analysis should seriously concern itself with examples of pictures, headlines, or cartoons which actually are editorials. What preferences, what points of view, do these "editorials" represent? One project may be to pick up current cartoons and make them subjects for group discussion. What particular point does the cartoonist want to put over? If there is any "other side," what is it? If you were to write an editorial along the same lines, how would it look? Another activity is the parlor game of picking headlines from the front page and trying to tell from the headline what the news story is about.

Memo to the Reader. The truly discriminating reader is the person who keeps in mind that it *is* important:

1. To *check the source of the stories.* Does the paper use *many* or *few* sources for the news it prints? What are those sources? Are they reliable?

2. To *spot his own prejudices* before judging personalities and statements in the news, to try to "see himself as others see him." Are his reactions in all situations free of bias? If not, why?
3. To *try to keep his own opinions separate from facts at hand.* How many of his opinions are informed and how many are uninformed?
4. To *avoid assuming that there is only one side to an issue* or even just two sides. The point of view he holds may or may not be the right one.
5. To *keep the newspaper informed* of his interest in the job it is doing. Letter-writing, group conferences with the editor, and club panels on "how to read the news" are just some of the means he and his friends can use.
6. To *shoulder the responsibility of a citizen in a democracy.* If he wants to preserve freedom, he has to keep himself informed on public issues, read to stay informed—and that means not just one magazine or newspaper, but several.
7. To *remember that even the best newspapers cannot do the whole job.* Self-education is vital to an alert citizenry. Libraries, educational films and radio programs, magazines, forums—all these are the tools of the mature citizen.

CHAPTER XI

Teaching Discrimination in Motion Pictures

EDGAR DALE

Introduction

The diagnosis of some of the ills of our system of mass communication has been well done. Report after report has been published concerning the press, the film, and broadcasting. We now know many of the deficiencies of these media. But therapy has been neglected. Some solutions are suggested in the foregoing chapters. Thus, we can try to guard against monopoly in newsgathering or distribution. We can encourage competition among the media. We can encourage improvement in the quality of the product. We can work for more social responsibility among owners, publishers, directors, and stockholders. But we can do more.

The writer suggests one major approach that gives excellent promise of success. There is reason to believe that the enlightened consumer of the mass media can change them significantly. *Rational choice* must be substituted for *uncritical acceptance.* The critically minded consumer must replace the sponge-minded consumer who blandly absorbs whatever is placed before him. Special emphasis will be given here to the motion picture, but the generalizations presented are fruitful in newspapers and in broadcasting.

Let us assume, first, that the viewing of motion pictures and television does have an effect upon the consumer, a reasonable hypothesis in view of the presentation by Fearing in chapter viii. We would agree with Fearing that this is not a linear effect and that it is hard to predict what effect will occur or when it will occur. Let us assume, also, that the effects may be "good" or "bad," e.g., in advancing or retarding one's own values, and that we shall want to decrease the "bad" effects and increase the "good" effects.

How can we do it? This is, of course, the problem of all education.

Undesirable effects might conceivably be eliminated by removing the motion-picture stimulus entirely. If the child saw no movies or television and had no comic books in his home, we might mistakenly forecast that he would then be immune to their effects. But here we face the fact that in this world those who look at TV or read comic strips associate with those who do not. Thus, even by removing the stimulus, the possibility of an indirect effect is still there.

Another possibility is to change the stimulus instead of removing it entirely. Presumably some movies have a good effect, and others have an undesirable effect. Let us, therefore, shift the films seen by the child from poor to good or from good to better. This is, of course, the problem of improving taste in any field. The availability of excellent books, newspapers, TV programs, comics, and movies is an important factor in learning good taste. To use this approach we would create a rich, stimulating environment by surrounding our pupils, our families, our communities with excellent books, magazines, recordings, plays, television, radio, encyclopedias, and the like.

We have a parallel here with what parents do about food. Young children are given choices of food—and these may be narrow in a large family—but the choice is among nourishing foods. By having good, nourishing food at hand, one learns to prefer such a diet.

This is one approach. Let us assume, for purposes of discussion but certainly not as a prescription for teaching, that we pay less attention to removing the stimulus of film or comic strip or television and concentrate on response. Let us assume that there will always be unsuitable books and films, stupid TV, excessive violence as in the books of Mickey Spillane. Let us assume that we cannot change the stimuli now. We can, however, change the choice of stimuli. This is, in fact a necessity anyway, since there are more films, TV programs, and comic strips than can be seen or read by any individual.

What can we do to change the response to the chosen stimulus? We can reduce the effect of the stimulus by developing what Herbert Blumer, head of the Department of Sociology at the University of California, has called "adult discount." One learns not to involve himself too deeply in the drama being seen, in the book

being read. He consciously remains the spectator and avoids being a sympathetic "participant." He says to himself, "Isn't it interesting what those people on the screen or stage are doing." He cultivates aloofness. In a very real sense all of us must do this in real life as well as for simulated life in fiction or drama. We simply cannot involve ourselves in all of the problems of people about us—our emotions would be drained. So all of us, consciously or not, make some resolution of this dilemma. We develop "adult discount."

Is there loss in richness of experience when one develops this adult discount? Yes, there is. But we do need a safety valve like this to protect our own personalities. The issue still remains, however: When do we discount and when do we trust, believe, and accept? To believe and accept nothing is as futile and disintegrating as to believe everything.

I have presented two polar approaches to the development of discriminating taste: (*a*) change or remove the stimulus, and (*b*) change the response. Actually, they are closely related, but they do illustrate variant approaches. Shall we refuse our children permission to attend the motion-picture theater until they are eight years of age? This has less meaning now because children may see motion pictures on TV at home. However, it seems reasonable to assume a difference in emotional impact on a child when he sees a motion picture in his home with his family near and when he sees the film in the highly suggestible atmosphere of the theater with many strange children and adults around.

The theory of changing or removing the stimulus has one great advantage. It does not set up bad habits or perverted tastes which must later be changed. Unwisely used, however, it may make attending a movie or viewing a particular TV program loom so large as to be out of all proportion to its real importance. One may, thus, fail to learn to take life experience in stride. The parallel of overprotecting children from evil or hard knocks is pertinent in this same connection.

How can we provide excellence in the movie or TV diet and still prepare the individual to meet undesirable experiences? Many difficulties arise at this point. Children want to see "westerns," which the parents may not approve, as well as to see excellent films. A child will read excellent literature and at the same time read certain

comics which his parents may disapprove. Jazz may be intermingled with classical music. We may conclude that, no matter what theory of taste parents and teachers may accept, children live in a world where unplanned stimuli are affecting them and where overprotection from the tawdry or inane must not rob a learner of the experience of seeing such episodes for what they are.

Factors Influencing Motion-Picture Production

In the light of this introduction, let us look at the broad problem of teaching good taste or discrimination in the field of the motion picture. Many of these same principles will apply equally well to broadcasting and reading materials, including the comics. What is the framework in which we can discuss the development of good taste or discrimination in motion pictures?

WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTS TO SEE

Let us look, first, at the richness of film experience now available. How can we make certain that more excellent films are produced and that fewer "poor" ones are produced? Laying aside the very complicated question of distinguishing between a good film and a poor one, we face the question of why films or newspapers or broadcasts are like they are. A simple but not very satisfactory answer is that we have the kind of films we have because we have the kind of people we have—the kind of people who make the movies and the kind of people who pay their money to see them.

In other words, it makes a difference in a society like ours whether you have men in it like the late Sam Woods who directed *Command Decision* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls;* like Samuel Goldwyn who produced *The Best Years of Our Lives;* like Stanley Kramer who produced *High Noon* and *Home of the Brave;* or those producers and directors of films from abroad, such as *Hamlet, Open City, Thirty-nine Steps,* and many others. Here, we come back to the philosophical outlook underlying the mass media—the extent to which economics dictates completely the kind of films made—with the public as the authoritarian dictator. Do producers give people what they want, or must a major communication industry be socially responsible for the effects it produces? This point has been discussed by Siebert in chapter ii.

The philosophy, "We give the people what they want," is a socially irresponsible one and will probably result in a deterioration of taste. The key concepts in this prescription are "the public" and "what it wants." Neither one is easily defined in operational terms. We know that there is no single public for films, and the motion-picture industry's failure to see this has probably caused them unnecessary financial loss. Why is this so?

First, you cannot give the public what it wants. The formula operationally could mean only: We gave the public what it wanted. What it wants is in the future, and the fact that it wanted something in the past is no proof that it wants it now. More than one producer who released a film at the end of a cycle has discovered this. Television producers know the variability of popular taste.

To talk of *the public* means little. We must first make the elementary division—doubtless in the mind of the producer—that he gives *the movie-going public* what it wants. That public tends to be recruited from younger persons (see chap. ix). Movie-going is much less characteristic of older persons than of younger persons. Indeed, the data collected by the industry show that "between the ages of thirty and fifty, more than half of the men and women in the United States, steady patrons of the movies in their earlier years, do not bother to see more than one picture a month; after fifty, more than half see virtually no pictures at all." [1] How television has affected this situation is not yet clear.

This movie-going public must be further differentiated into the public that likes the typical "western," the public that goes for musicals, the public that likes travel or documentary pictures, the public that likes the films of Alex Guinness, etc. It is possible to make a film for one of the publics noted above and have it be financially successful. This differentiation of publics must also be made by the producers of radio and television programs. Few radio or television programs have ever been heard by more than 50 per cent of the adults in this country. What we have, then, and must cater to is a public that only rarely and under highest motivation reaches 50 per cent of the people. We must remember, too, that these are a series of publics whose past tastes can be noted but whose future tastes still lie in the realm of the unpredictable.

[1] Gilbert Seldes, *The Great Audience*, p. 12. New York: Viking Press, 1950.

The problem of pandering to tastes should not be ignored. One can give a public what he thinks will be liked by them, even though he may not like it himself. But no writer or director or actor can be long associated with such efforts and retain his intellectual integrity. Perhaps the safest guide is to give the public to which he is addressing himself what he himself likes. Otherwise, he may be pandering by giving something which will be liked but which does violence to his appreciation of the artistic.

We see, therefore, that as we discuss discrimination in the movies, the press, or broadcasting, we face the issue of artistic integrity, of social responsibility. It cannot be escaped. There is no automatic one-to-one correspondence between the present tastes of individuals and what is produced for them. Tastes are created, appeased, or degraded by what one produces. Learning is being reinforced or reconstructed.

RELATION OF QUALITY OF FILMS TO PROFITS

Let us assume now that excellent films do exist. What is the next step in the building of good taste? It is to insure that the prospective customers actually see these films. Presumably, if they do, the producers will make others like them. Producers of films, newspapers, and television often say that excellence is not easily sold to the public, that it goes unrewarded. It is repeatedly alleged that the excellent film, drama, or broadcast is not acceptable to the public. Pictures which got excellent reviews but apparently did not do well at the box office include the following: *Intruder in the Dust*, *Long Voyage Home*, *Treasure of Sierra Madre*, *The Men*, *The Magnificent Yankee*, *The Fourposter*, *All My Sons*, *Limelight*, *Red Badge of Courage*, *The Brave Bulls*, *Portrait of Jennie*, and *The Heiress*.

Evidence of financial failure of excellent films is hard to discover. The evidence as sometimes presented by the motion-picture industry may go like this: Certain films are mentioned as having lost money. It may be a production of a film made from a Shakespearean play. Obviously, the issue always is, "Was it a good motion picture?" "Did excellent critics approve this film?" The fact that *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream* lost money for Warner Brothers (if it did) means little since able critics reviewed it unfavorably. It would be folly to argue that no films of this type ever failed at the box office,

but examples of failure, as noted above, are rare. Some films like *The Informer* might have failed without specialized publicity or praise from the critics. Remember, too, that films rated as poor by critics have also been resounding failures.

Sometimes when the producer speaks of a film as not having made money, he does not mean that it lost money. He means that with the cast available, with the time and money spent, he might have invested this same effort to much better advantage. This is certainly possible.

But one cannot keep books on single films. Even if a highly regarded film did turn up in the red, this may well have been a factor attracting new customers to the box office. That this hypothesis does carry weight is suggested by the effectiveness of the little theaters in attracting people to the box office who rarely attend typical films.

Physical Availability of Excellent Films

Let us suppose now that socially responsible producers do create excellent films. What is the next step in building good taste relative to this type of film and other films like it? Do we move at once to the consumer and his education in discrimination and good taste? Unfortunately, it is not so easy as this. The physical availability of an excellent film does not necessarily mean that it will be available under easy conditions of viewing for a particular consumer. The issue of easy availability has several dimensions in motion-picture production and distribution and in the other mass media as well.

Excellent films were once distributed in such a way that their period of run was brief and little opportunity existed for seeing such films after their various runs in the theaters. There was no regular source of supply of film classics. In 1935, in Hollywood, I suggested to one of the larger producers that they reissue earlier films, that a public existed for them. The producer asked for an example, and I mentioned among others, *All Quiet on the Western Front*. He tolerantly replied that the film had been released in 1930, and the technical changes in sound films were so great that the audience would be amused at this film as a museum piece. The producer was, of course, mistaken. This film, as well as others as

old or older, has been shown profitably for many years. The producer had overlooked the simple fact that slickness of technique is not what makes a motion picture great.

The classics have been increasingly made available by distributors both in 35-millimeter and in 16-millimeter films. Even more important, the increasing use of small "art" theaters for first runs has enabled slow-starting pictures to get word-of-mouth publicity, which is sometimes lacking when the pictures are run speedily through large theaters. This situation is destined to change as the large motion-picture house becomes passé in many cities.

So the availability of excellent films has been greatly improved. Parents and teachers, alert to the need for building discriminating tastes, find it easier to attend excellent films themselves and arrange for their children or students to attend them as well. Not only are they available at the theaters but they are becoming available on television after they have been shown in theaters. Those who want good films have an obligation to attend them. One observer has wryly reported that reformers will do everything they can to get better films, except attend them.

There is another aspect of availability which needs to be noted. The Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America have made excellent films available in shortened versions, thus, fitting them to the purposes of class study. This work has been under the general direction of Roger Albright of the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America in co-operation with the National Council of Teachers of English. Titles such as the following are available: *David Copperfield*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Madame Curie*, *Drums along the Mohawk*, and *How Green Was My Valley*.

The use of these shortened versions is not a substitute for seeing the film itself. It merely means that key parts of the film shown in pleasing sequential fashion are available for the conditions of classroom viewing. Wise teachers have prepared study materials for such versions. The value of such films finally lies in their discriminating use by teachers of drama or literature. They are not meant to be substitutes for the original versions.

A film useful in teaching discrimination has been prepared by a committee of the National Council of Teachers of English with Marion C. Sheridan of New Haven, Connecticut, as chairman.

Other members were Hardy R. Finch, Max J. Herzberg, Joseph Mersand, Marion S. Walker, and Samuel D. Wehr. This seventeen-minute film, titled *Understanding Movies,* was developed in co-operation with Teaching Film Custodians.

The film includes a short introductory sequence which develops the theme of greater enjoyment of motion pictures. This is followed by excerpts from five superior commercial films to illustrate excellence in five fields: directing, acting, photography, editing, and art and music. These excerpts are from *Tennessee Johnson, The Good Earth, Treasure Island, David Copperfield,* and *Romeo and Juliet.* A teacher's guide, which includes a bibliography on the art of the film, is also available.

Planned Programs for Teaching Motion-Picture Discrimination

Let us suppose now that we have successfully surmounted the first hurdle—the availability of excellent films. What is the next operational step in the building of good taste? It seems to the writer that we must have *a planned program* for the teaching of discriminating taste in films, TV, and radio. It is usually assumed without argument that this is a good thing to do with books. That discriminating taste has not always resulted from such courses is beside the point here. We know that the love of good books is not insured by taking a formal course. But common, shared experiences on an informal, yet planned, basis is a fruitful way to develop good taste in films, reading, or television.

The movement to begin teaching motion-picture discrimination in the schools had a dual origin. In the early thirties, the National Council of Teachers of English, under the direction of William Lewin, carried out a nation-wide study of the possibilities of this field. In 1934, Lewin published the volume, *Photoplay Appreciation in American High Schools.*[2] The Council has taken a direct interest in this area of study ever since.

The early 1930's was also the time when the Payne Fund studies were going forward. Attention was being given to the content of

[2] William Lewin, *Photoplay Appreciation in American High Schools.* National Council of Teachers of English Monograph, No. 2. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1934.

films, to children's attendance at films, the influence of films on sleep, conduct, attitudes, emotions, and information. The late W. W. Charters, director of these studies, argued cogently that to change the effects of motion pictures on children and youth we should teach them to be discriminating, to discern the difference between a good film and a poor one, to be aware of the social values in films. He maintained that we should teach discrimination in the choice of films as we would in the choice of radio, newspapers, magazines, or books.

The writer was commissioned to prepare a book for high-school students which could form the basis of a unit or course for teaching discrimination in this field. This volume appeared in 1935 and was titled *How To Appreciate Motion Pictures.*[3] I worked with school authorities in seven states to introduce instruction in this field. It is quite clear that this same approach to discriminating choice is applicable to other mass media.

Four objectives in teaching motion-picture discrimination were commonly set up, namely: (*a*) to sensitize students to the possible influence of films as one of the important mass media; (*b*) to help students choose their movie-fare more discriminatingly; (*c*) to develop sensitivity to the social and artistic values in motion pictures; (*d*) to build individual and social responsibility for motion pictures and other mass media. Each of these objectives will be discussed briefly.

Objective 1. To sensitize students to the influence of films as one of the mass media.

Curiously enough, as we think about the effects of certain experiences upon us, we usually think we are sensitive to excellence and immune to harm. I once asked a class of college Seniors and graduate students who were studying motion pictures if they would be willing to sit in sometime, at the request of the state censor (also State Director of Education), in judging the possible harmfulness of films to Ohio adults and children. All were willing to do so. I then asked why they thought they could view such a film without being harmed themselves. Why did they think they were wise

[3] Edgar Dale, *How To Appreciate Motion Pictures.* The Payne Fund Studies. New York: Macmillan Co., 1935.

enough to censor such films for someone else? Their explanation was, in effect, that superior persons should protect inferior ones and that they, being superior persons, would not be influenced.

As one studies the history of censorship legislation, he notes that sometimes opponents of censorship have abandoned this argument and say that the stage and the film have no influence, anyway. The motion-picture and television industries, however, whether through conviction or a sense of necessity, have admitted the influence of the screen by setting up a code noting what may or may not be shown on the screen.

Former Mayor Walker of New York City once challenged the censors by pointing out that he never heard of any girl being ruined by a book. Morris Ernst once asked an assembled group whether anyone present had been morally injured through any book, play, or picture. Sarah Bernhardt, the noted actress, once said:

> "I have often heard people deny the moral influence of the theater, but I find it undeniable. This influence has existed from all time, and never, in my opinion, has it been anything but beneficial." We all know that a single illustration is worth more than a hundred axioms, and, if only from this point of view, the theater is a potent school of morality.[4]

Channing Pollock has said:

> The influence of the theater is much overrated, and neither children nor adults have ever rushed out of a playhouse to commit murder after witnessing a performance of *Richard III* or *Othello*.[5]

The problem of content and effect of the mass media is discussed elsewhere in this volume. Suffice it to say here, that we are on shaky ground when we use the argument of no influence by the mass media or influence only in a beneficial direction. The valid arguments against censorship should rest on a firmer foundation.

We do a disservice both to scientific findings and to the integrity of the writer, the playwright, the director, or any creative workers when we assume that what he does is of no consequence. We are on safer ground when we assume influence, perhaps growing in stalagmitic fashion, as noted by Schramm in chapter vi. Student dis-

[4] *Review of Reviews*, XXVII (February, 1903), 235.

[5] *Current Opinion*, LXII (June, 1947), 408.

cussion of influence of the mass media might lead to conclusions such as the following:

1. No experience is without the possibility of changing the learning and, thus, the life of an individual.

2. To assume the possibility of a beneficial influence of books, whether the Bible or the daily newspaper or a comic strip, would *logically* assume the possibility of harmful influence.

3. Influence is likely to be small from a single exposure, but cumulative experiences in the same direction may produce significant differences in attitudes and information. Influences may well be cumulative and important unless cancelled out by contrary influences.

4. To argue that one's basic personality is pretty well laid out in the earlier years of one's life may be sound doctrine. However, even if this is true, the specific behavior of an individual in such a framework may well be influenced by the mass media. Thus, the authoritarian personality is not likely to be changed quickly or even at all by mass-media influences, but the focus of his activities may well take its form from his experiences in the mass media.

In winding up this question of how one treats the problem of influence in a study of the motion picture, I would hypothesize that to discuss and be aware of possible influence may diminish the possibility of harmful experience and increase the possibility of beneficial influence. For example, to raise the issue of the influence of Negro stereotypes on television, as a factor in reinforcing prejudice or developing it where it did not exist before, is to put the issue in the minds of people who see the program. Thus, one's perception of the experience changes. Looking at a particular program to assess its influence may decrease the likelihood of harmful influence.

5. The school and the home certainly have responsibility for helping individuals take charge of themselves. We must develop, in David Riesman's phrase, "inner-directed" people who can cope with their environment instead of being overwhelmed by it. An understanding of the role of the motion picture and other mass media in influencing one's life and that of others is good background for developing control from "the inside" instead of surrendering helplessly to control from "the outside."

Objective 2. To help students choose their movie-fare more discriminatingly.

A second objective in teaching motion-picture discrimination is to help students choose their movie-fare more wisely, to get the habit of going to *a* movie instead of to *the movies*. The argument behind such habits of intelligent choice is, I find, thoughtfully accepted by high-school students. They realize that their attendance at a particular motion picture helps finance that kind of production. Attendance is interpreted as a vote of approval, with the suggestion to the producer that this is what the public of young people *want* and are willing to pay for.

The possibilities of influence on mass media through thoughtful choice has been neglected in our schools. We have too often assumed that all of us are at the mercy of swirling social forces too difficult for us to comprehend, let alone change. This is the argument underlying Marxist theory of the inevitableness of historical changes, as, for example, the decline of capitalism. Yet, curiously enough Marxists do not let matters rest there but work hard to make "inevitable" goals inevitable. The powerlessness of individual choice is also the argument behind those who talk about the wave of the future.

Such arguments always diminish the role of the individual and maximize the role of a dominant clique or group. Let us emphasize the fact that to be a mature citizen means that one is in full charge of his choices and that he rejects the idea that an elite class or a power group of any kind should be in charge. The aim of the teacher is to maximize the role of the individual as an influence in changing the mass media, to dramatize the role of individual choice as a basic ingredient of a democratic society.

I have noted that the aims of instruction in motion-picture discrimination might well be, first, to become aware of the influence of the motion picture and, second, to develop the habit of thoughtful choice.

Objective 3. To develop sensitivity to the social and artistic values in motion pictures.

This objective puts us on ground quite familiar to the teacher of literature, and a number of parallels arise. The teacher of literature

helps his students distinguish between the real and the false, the honest and the dishonest. The elements of dishonesty in a novel or play or motion picture are very much alike; for example, the stereotyped characterization, the either-or moral dilemma, the black-or-white situation, the hokum, the oversimplification, the excessive appeal to sentiment, the contrived, trite ending.

The wise teacher can show how motion-picture and television writers sometimes become the prisoners of their own clichés. The public for whom one writes may also become bemused by such patterned approaches. Thus, Mona Kent, who attempted in her radio writing of the serial, *Portia Faces Life*, to break away from her own familiar clichés and make Portia "more rounded," received such protests from her listeners that she went "scurrying back to the shelter of the nearest clump of clichés" (*Time*, September 12, 1949).

The motion picture shares certain social and artistic values with other communication media. It, also, has an art and discipline of its own to which the student can be introduced. The motion picture is, above all, a visual art. Its life, its reason for existence, depends upon its ability to show action, to make us see. True, it uses sound, dialogue, and music, but these are supplementary to the film's movement.

The prospective teacher of motion-picture discrimination may well ask: How much knowledge of film technique is necessary or desirable? Would too much emphasis on production methods subtract from over-all enjoyment?

In reply, one may say that every art has its primary and secondary, conscious and unconscious, levels of enjoyment and appreciation. The movie-goer may enjoy a story that flows smoothly because of skillful camera work and not be conscious of how it is being done. Or, he may have a wide understanding of such technique and not in any sense be robbed of the primary enjoyment of seeing the film.

I once asked Elliot Nugent, who has had wide experience both as actor and director, whether his knowledge of the art of the theater and the motion picture had made him a less interested spectator. He said, on the contrary, that it was very easy for him to put himself in the role of the spectator and become absorbed, not in the technique, but in the drama itself.

Objective 4. To build individual and social responsibility for motion pictures and other mass media.

The fourth objective of the study of motion-picture discrimination is to develop a feeling of responsibility on the part of students for improving the general quality of motion pictures. It means taking the role of the citizen and seeing how one can improve the quality of life of the city or village where one lives. This purpose and the resulting action need be neither priggish nor pretentious. Active citizenship is the goal of general education, and all individuals need to think through just what they are putting into their community in return for what they have taken out. Their contribution to the improvement of films may be as simple as attending good films and recommending such films to others. We must remind ourselves of the person who will do everything to improve motion pictures except attend them.

The four objectives discussed above may be summarized by a statement from *The English Language Arts* which notes the outcomes toward which the teacher should strive:

> In all of these areas as the student's sense of appreciation grows, he should understand how the form, the rhythm, or the color tone of a piece of literature, a film, or a radio drama enhance one's enjoyment of it. He should leave school having developed conscious criteria by which to determine the worth of what he enjoys as art products, as social commentary, and as effective representation of the essential truths of human experience. He should give evidence in his voluntary selection of plays, films, radio programs, and reading of having applied his standards in the making of his choices.[6]

A teacher may accept the obligation of teaching students critical discernment and may wish to introduce such guidance in motion-picture viewing into the elementary- or high-school curriculum. What next? How does one go about it? The following proposals are offered:

1. Work with parents and other members of the community to see that a desirable pattern of recreation is available. Growth in maturity comes through reacting to a wide variety of recreational and educa-

[6] *The English Language Arts*, p. 49. Edited by Dora V. Smith. National Council of Teachers of English Publications. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952.

tional choices. This means that the community must provide a rich environment of experience in the arts.

2. Join with parents to discuss the role of motion pictures and television in the lives of students. A fruitful approach will be through providing information about excellent, available films or television programs. Here one could emphasize the four objectives in the teaching of motion-picture discrimination and get the judgment of parents as to how the development of taste could be a joint project of school and home. The teacher may well get acquainted with the work of the two national associations aimed at improving the quality of radio and television, namely, the National Association for Better Radio and Television (882 Victoria Ave., Los Angeles 5, California) and the American Council for Better Broadcasts (423 N. Pinckney St., Madison, Wisconsin).
3. Co-operate with the home to set up a planned curriculum of experiences for growth in taste. Robert Underwood Johnson, formerly editor of *Century Magazine*, said that "taste is discrimination many times exercised." This means that we must build a curriculum from the first grade through college which aims year by year to mature the taste of the boy or girl, young man or young woman.
4. Provide a curriculum that is both informal and formal. The formal curriculum will bear responsibility for including desirable concepts and skill at the maturity level of the learner. If we define "discrimination as the ability to discern qualitative differences," then we shall provide or make use of motion-picture and television experiences where choices involving such discernment are relevant. Planning, choosing, evaluating—whether of stories, books, newspapers, magazines, recordings, television programs—are all a part of the learning process.
5. Since motion pictures and television have both style and content, they provide experiences for writing and speaking. A motion-picture and television experience often has a richness, a depth, and an emotional quality which makes it especially useful for communication. Students want to talk about the mass media. We may expect that high-school classes will review films as they do books. Social-studies classes will use the content of films and television to illuminate problems of human relations.

Field trips can be made to television studios, to motion-picture theaters to see projection equipment, to newspapers to interview motion-picture critics. There can be talks in class by local exhibitors. Scripts and screenplays can be used directly in the classroom as study materials.

Colleges can and do set up special programs of films for informal and formal uses. Foreign films and film classics can be secured at

reasonable rental rates. Some college dailies have motion-picture and television columns to meet the needs of the students for critical commentary and to train journalists. Student journalists would do well to read John Crosby, Robert Lewis Shayon, Gilbert Seldes, and other discerning critics in the field of television.

6. The school and college can build from film and television experience certain generalizations, certain critiques which are useful in all phases of communication. These media can be seen from the point of view of agencies for the sharing of ideas—ideas to be entertained by able viewers—and then accepted or rejected, depending upon their merit. In short, the goal is to develop the twentieth-century man, one who can use ideas but not be used by them, a man who in a time of instability can achieve stability by developing standards for evaluating his experiences. He can, in short, take charge of his own life.

Conclusion

The six points made in the preceding discussion lead inevitably to a key point for this chapter—indeed for the entire yearbook. The teacher and the parent are vital factors in developing discriminating taste in the mass media. Several responsibilities emerge from this conclusion.

Certainly the teacher himself must have discriminating tastes. He must have sampled radio and television programs and developed preferences of his own. He must be sympathetic with immature tastes and be willing to let each individual develop his own pattern of choice.

Since he wants his students to associate with excellence in the field of the arts, he himself must do so. His enthusiastic comment about an excellent film, or book, or television program can, if wisely presented, have a good deal of influence.

And finally, every teacher or parent who wants to make his voice count in increasing excellence in the mass media must do so on the basis of a realistic understanding of the communication process as it operates in the modern mass media. The writer believes that teachers, both as individuals and in groups, must study, evaluate, and use the findings of specialists in the mass media, many of which are presented in this volume.

CHAPTER XII

The Citizen and the Mass Media

R. J. BLAKELY

Introduction

This volume is written for citizens who are educators. Its chapters drive home the points that educators must reckon with and employ the mass media and that, to do so, they must understand the mass media. The authors of the preceding chapters give basic analyses and information to aid understanding. This chapter is written for educators who are citizens. Just as several of the previous chapters have made specific suggestions, so will the present one. But the main effort will be to identify issues and to indicate directions, because creativity and experiment, not mere emulation, are the primary needs.

To understand the role of the media of mass communications—their dangers and their opportunities—the citizen needs to have some understanding of the nature of the larger developments of which they are an integral part. To suggest this nature, I will use as a kind of shorthand character the word *control.* Behind this word lie vast changes in concepts of the universe, both physical and human. The central notion is that, by the deliberate application of reason, mankind can impose its will upon life to a degree much greater than previously suspected, a degree as yet to be discovered. Reason is an essentially human characteristic, and there is no chapter in human history that does not bear the mark of its application. Moreover, within the past several centuries only, the direct and indirect consequences of the application of reason have increased in degree so much as to bring about a difference in kind. This means greater control over physical nature, of course; and, although not obviously so, it means also greater control over or attempts to have

greater control over human beings.

Let us dwell on this point for a moment. Both more energy—"the capacity to do work"—and more ambitious plans for the work to be done are involved. Increased power and larger projects relate an increasing number of human beings, all of whom are potential planners, sources, and users of energy. From the point of view of any one person or group, more and more human beings either (*a*) can interfere with or are needed for the execution of one's own plans or (*b*) are impinging upon or are seeking help from one's self in the execution of *their* plans.

The point is that in the modern world, even with the best will, we cannot let one another alone, either as individuals or as groups. We are too important to one another as elements of our common environment. The trend toward interdependency, which already ties together greater numbers of people in more intimate ways than ever before, is probably only just well under way.

Since we have to concern ourselves one with another, whether we wish it or not, the question is, how do we regard one another? as elements of the physical world? or as fellow humans?

If the former, then, when it suits our plans, we destroy human beings (parallels: weeds, rats, germs), or exploit them (parallels: beasts of burden, coal fields), or cultivate them for our purposes (parallels· hybrid animals and vegetables) or create them for our purposes (parallel: machines, including mechanical brains). To this line of logic there is no limit. The Nazis who had lampshades made of human skin were but doing what others do with the skins of cows. It is all in the attitude. Some Orientals identify themselves with vegetables and animals. Even humane Occidentals play God with animals and plants. Given certain assumptions, it is but a short and straight step to play God with other human beings.

If we regard other human beings, not as elements of our physical environment, but as fellow humans—brothers and sisters, children of the same God—what then? We know from the lives of our saints what this means in individual terms. We know, in a limited way, from the ideals and the successes of our free society what it means in social terms. But what does it mean in a world of thousands of cultures and billions of human beings? Only the high religions and philosophies give us a hint. Most certainly, it means

shared control—shared purposes, shared power, and shared rights and responsibilities. Even the greatest successes of our free society can be but crude signposts to what may be possible when all human cultures and all human beings come to share the common project of realizing their humanness.

Must we assume, then, that the decisive trend toward interdependency is either a descent to Dachau or the rise to a very much better world than today's? If this choice sounds too apocalyptic, reflect: In the modern world we can't let one another alone. The intimacy of our interrelationships will deepen and widen. The Fascist and Communist systems demonstrate the theoretical and practical possibilities of treating human beings as part of the physical environment to be manipulated. The Communist power advances through the gaps between ideals and performances of other systems. Merely being "against" Communism and the Soviet Union is for ourselves to treat human beings as part of the physical environment. The notion that mankind can shape its future is abroad in the world and cannot be put back in the bottle. Only a decent and rational alternative to totalitarianism will save the human race from a crippling conflict or an inhuman order.

Back to communications. Schramm cites its root (chap. vi): "When we communicate we are trying to establish a 'commonness' with someone." But what kind of "commonness"? The farmer and his horse have a commonness. His "gee" and "haw" or his jerk on the reins and his lash communicate. The inquisitor asking repetitive questions of a drugged prisoner is communicating. So is the operator feeding a problem into a mechanical brain. In contrast, the teacher who is trying to help a pupil learn to think originally is communicating. The scientist reporting on an experiment to his colleagues is communicating. So is the statesman doing his honest best to make a complicated problem intelligible to the voters. I have chosen to begin with the larger question of *control*, which raises questions of "by whom?" "how?" "for what ends?" In control, communications have always played a pervasive and often decisive role. In the growth of power, both physical and social which I have sketched, the development of the mass media is an integral part. With the advance of the idea of the greater possibilities of control, with more energy, with larger and more intricate plans, with a tighter and

wider interdependency, the role of communications has expanded. Schramm explains, ". . . mass communication . . . in many respects . . . has taken over the function of *society communicating*."

Schramm (chap. vi), Fearing (chap. viii), and others, document the claim that the effects of a message through the mass media cannot be predicted without knowledge of other factors, such as the individual recipient, his situation, and his group environment. Schramm vividly illustrates that the Communists do not consider a *message* over the mass media out of relationship with these other factors, that when they *have to* they rate the other factors above the message, and that when they *can* they play all four—the message, the situation, the group environment, and the recipient—in harmony. By means of control over the message, the situation, and the group environment, they assail the final bastion, the personality of the individual. This is where the new authoritarian system outstrips the old, as the jet outspeeds the oxcart. This is where such terrifying activities as "brain-washing" take place.

To summarize this introduction: The citizen of a free society, considering the role of the mass media and his role in regard to the mass media, should realize that he is considering the central issue of our time—the fate of the individual personality. He cannot consider the role of the mass media out of this context. He cannot consider this issue without regard to the role of the mass media. When he asks what he, as a citizen, can do with and through the mass media, he should remember that the messages transmitted through the mass media, however important, are only a part. Other parts are the recipient, his situation in which the message is received, and the group environment in which he lives. To these factors he, like the Fascist and the Communist, must pay attention also.

Then it is that he should realize the great gifts of freedom. He is free—free through individual and co-operative effort to take part in the shaping of these factors. Though he must deal with the same factors as the Communist, there is an essential difference. The Communist's final objective is the personality of the *other* person. The free man's point of beginning is his *own* personality. The Communist's objective is to govern others. The free man's objective is to help others govern themselves. Through the home, the church, the school, the community, large and small, and a host of voluntary

organizations, the free man can influence the personalities and group environments of others.

Some Large Issues

In this section I shall treat briefly several aspects of the main issue with which we are dealing—the fate of the individual personality—always with an eye on the citizen and the mass media. I shall use as categories three of the factors of the effect of communication identified by Schramm: the individual, the group environment, and the message. I omit the fourth factor, the individual's situation, because, in a free society, it is too diversified.

THE INDIVIDUAL

When many persons have to live and work closely together, one way or another, as they do in the world of applied science, the question is, how much does one want them to be the same and how much does one want them to be different? Obviously, they must have enough in common to work together; yet, because of specialization of function, they must have significant differences. The same problem confronts both the totalitarian and the free society. Their answers are, of course, very different.

In the totalitarian system the basic distinction is between the rulers and the ruled. The ruled must be fundamentally identical, with surface differences only pertaining to the functions they serve; and within each category of function the members must be identical. The main instrument for shaping conformity is not violence but indoctrination, although, of course, fear of violence is an ever-present influence. The mass media are major instruments for indoctrination. The rulers, who are above rules, control the mass media with particular precision. Effect, not truth or beauty, is the only criterion. The messages of the mass media are meshed with control of the other elements (the individual situation, the group environment, and the personality of the recipient), above all the group environment. Each group is dominated by party members. *Even face-to-face communication is made into a mass medium.* The ideal is to have each personal communication an imprint of the official master.

The aim of the free society is the fullest possible development

of the individual personality. But what if the unique personalities which are developed do not serve the free society? Or, what if, without design but under subjection to similar influences, they become pale carbons of some standardized original? To help avoid these alternatives is the purpose of the present volume. I will simply say that there is no necessary contradiction between sharing a life in common with other persons and the fulfilment of personality. On the contrary, the human personality is realized only in society, and the surest way of realization is in co-operative effort to make the kind of society in which others can realize their personalities. To contrast ideals: The totalitarian society wants a nation of *interchangeable parts;* the free society wants a nation of *related individuals.* And, just as the totalitarian society makes even personal communication into a mass medium, *the free society must make the mass media serve original expression, personal response, and face-to-face communication.*

The neatness of these contrasts should not make their reality suspect; nor should the symbols of contrasting objectives be considered merely slogans in the war of words. They are real. But the democratic ideals are hard to achieve. A society cannot be devoted to the fulfilment of the individual, the individual cannot realize himself in society, unless there is a great "in-commonness" of the right kind. Communications, particularly mass communications, must convey the right common elements, but they must also be based upon those elements. Here, we come to another factor identified by Schramm, Fearing, and others, in the equation of mass communications.

THE GROUP ENVIRONMENT

Applied science has certain similar effects, regardless of time and place. One is the re-formation of social groups. The general, highly self-sufficient, almost-organismic community in which the members are related as human beings is dissolved. New, specialized, interrelated, almost-mechanistic groups in which members are related as functions are formed. The result is suggested in two vivid phrases—"Humanity Uprooted" (the title of a book about the Soviet Union) and "The Lonely Crowd" (the title of a book about the United States).

A society organized like a machine needs structure and synchronization. Human beings living in a society organized like a machine, nevertheless, need human satisfactions, like purpose, identification, "belonging."

The Communists try to provide for these needs and to take advantage of them in such a way as to serve their ends. They build a skeleton of the party faithful into the "mass" and organize groups and activities around the skeleton. The direction of the organization comes from the centralized state; any other institution, formal or informal, which gets in the way is destroyed or incorporated.

The free society meets the needs for organization in ways too complicated even to indicate here. The human satisfactions are met —in so far as they are met—through voluntary groups and activities. But, disturbingly, many individuals in the modern free society either have no satisfactory social life or get their satisfactions in groups and activities which are potentially or actually antisocial. In this situation, the fare presented by the mass media often contributes to undesirable results—retreat from reality, vicarious living, vacuous inner lives, unrealistic romanticizing, crime, and the like.

In this situation the problem of "objectivity" becomes acute. The problem is complex and gnarled. But the two central elements are the questions: "Is there a truth even though apprehension of it may vary and communication of it be difficult?" "Is there a general interest as opposed to special interests, even though the determination of it may be difficult?" To be objective, a communicator must answer yes to both of these questions and then honestly strive to serve truth and the general interest. But to have the objectivity *communicated*, the recipients also must believe in truth and the general interest and must honestly try to serve them. When individuals are isolated or caught up in antisocial group influences, even the most objective communication does not have the desired effect. Consequently we must pay attention not only to communication but also to the social setting.

A huge task ahead of the free society is to create a social environment which will give many individuals the social satisfactions they formerly experienced in the general, informal, small community and to do so in ways that serve the goals of individual freedom and social responsibility. The mass media are indispensable tools in

accomplishing this objective. On the one hand, they can reach the isolated individual when all other ways fail; on the other hand, they reach individuals in groups and, as Schramm says (chap. vi), ". . . it may well be that the chief influence of mass communication on individuals is really a kind of secondary influence, reflected to the group and back again." On the one hand, they can be used to interpret general significance to the specialized groups; on the other hand, they can be used to interpret specialized groups to the community.

THE MESSAGE

Several writers in this volume have made the point that, in terms of democratic values, one cannot predict the effects of a message; a message which seems good or bad does not necessarily exert a good or bad influence upon the recipient. But read the researcher's language carefully. It says that other factors are involved. It does *not* say that the message is unessential. False, distorted, mistaken, stupid, confused, or frivolous messages over the mass media can be used to teach discriminating reception and straight thinking, but only if there is a solid diet of truth, fact, proportion, and balance, planned by good intention and prepared by sure hands (see Stensland, chap. x, and Dale, chap. xi). The cause of self-government will not be promoted haphazardly by means of the mass media any more than will any other cause. Educators must pay as much attention to their objectives and their methods as the indoctrinators do. The significance of this for the citizen who would use the mass media to realize the ideals of freedom is that he must incessantly strive to clarify and enlarge his philosophy, in addition to the more obvious need to learn the skills of communication. His most persuasive message will not be explicit in either the substance or the technique. It will be implicit in his attitude. Is he sincere? Does he know what he is talking about? Does he respect his audience? Is he doing his best to transmit his best to the best of his audience? Does he commit himself on an equal basis with others, to be persuaded as well as to persuade, to learn as well as to teach? Is he trying to help others be free, to do what they want to do, instead of doing what he wants them to do? The implicit messages of sincerity, firmness of knowledge, straightness of thinking, and respect for the recipient—these "get across" the impersonal barriers of time

and space which are the media of the mass communications.

These three factors—the individual, the group environment, and the message—suggest two other aspects: freedom and voluntary action.

FREEDOM

In chapter ii, Siebert describes four social philosophies, which he names authoritarian, libertarian, Marxist, and social responsibility. This last, he writes, ". . . has developed in the twentieth century, and it remains to be seen whether its innovations can be grafted onto the libertarian doctrine." It is arguable whether this fourth should be considered a distinct philosophy or a body of adjustments to new conditions. Certainly several of the assumptions of the libertarian theory are being qualified. We seem to be moving in these directions: first, from emphasis upon private interest to emphasis upon social interest; second, from a fear of governmental power to a fear of the power which can be exerted by nongovernmental institutions; and, third, from a negative attitude concerning what government should do and what private interests should not do to an affirmative attitude concerning both.

There is always reason to fear the submergence of the individual in the society and the abuses of government. But there are reasons for optimism concerning the outcome, so far as these factors are concerned. One is that the roots of the humaneness and morality which are being asserted to qualify individual selfishness are older than Adam Smith and John Locke, and the task of modifying the means of the libertarian society is much less formidable than that of transforming both the means and the real ends of the totalitarian society. Another reason for optimism is the success we have enjoyed during the present century in distributing widely the benefits of our economic system, in maintaining social fluidity, and in approaching equality of opportunity. Frederick Lewis Allen's *The Big Change* is a cheering book, with impressive documentation.

But there is, in my judgment, one major reason for alarm, which may nullify all our other gains. This is in our changing attitude toward freedom of expression.

We seem to be tending, almost by tacit agreement, to regard freedom of expression as a *private* right to be restricted like other

private rights when they are abused instead of a *public* right that cannot be restricted without damage to the general welfare. True, dark irrational forces have been discovered, both in the individual and in the society, but how were they discovered? By *rational* analysis. And what is the alternative? Certainly not irrationality. True, the margins of permissible error in the modern world are narrower than used to be. But how do we avoid or minimize error? Certainly not by being ignorant of alternatives or of relevant fact. Freedom of expression from the social point of view is the right of the citizens to hear all arguments and to look at all proofs and the responsibility to let others do the same.

If the citizens of a democracy cannot be trusted to look at bare reality, then who can? What is the answer to Thomas Jefferson's logic that, if a person cannot be trusted to govern himself, he cannot be trusted to govern others? This is too large a subject for exposition here. But there is good reason for believing that the American people turned into a blind alley when they accepted uncritically and almost gratefully Justice Holmes' doctrine of "clear and present danger." Is this not the nullification of the freedom of speech rather than an interpretation of it?

It is the citizen's responsibility to think through the role of civil liberties (a good point of beginning is Alexander Meiklejohn's *Free Speech*) and to act according to his best lights. This is particularly necessary in relationship to the mass media, which "in many respects . . . [have] taken over the role of *society communicating*." Several chapters in this volume have discussed the difficulties of the radio, the film, and television in dealing with vital (and, therefore, controversial) matters. Only firm insistence and support from the citizenry will make it possible for these media to be forthright. And this means support for them not only when they transmit messages with which one agrees but also when they transmit messages with which one disagrees, not just when they deal with popular opinions, but even more so when they deal with unpopular opinions.

The press, with a constitutional guarantee and a longer history, has had a wider latitude. In the main, it has done a good job of defending its *right to publish* but not necessarily *others' rights to read;* it has shown a vigilance against dangers from government (at least from the executive branch) but not necessarily against dangers

from other sources, including itself. At the present time the press, with notable exceptions, is being used to restrict and poison freedom of expression. By a kind of *jujitsu* (the use of an opponent's strength against himself), several representatives and senators, and the persons they use or who use them, exploit the press' taste for exposure and sensation to discredit and intimidate. There is no simple remedy. Perhaps there is no remedy. Perhaps we are watching the disintegration of the democratic faith and virtues. But each person can refuse to be buffaloed and can do and say what seems to him to be right. Not only fear but courage also is contagious, and few of us by painful exploration ever discover where the iron boundaries of our freedom really are.

VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY

Under the impact of applied science, three primary institutions have suffered, and three secondary institutions have thrived. The primary institutions which have suffered are the home, the church, and the local community. The three secondary institutions which have thrived are the school, the formal organization, and the state. This is so wherever science has been applied. I would like to try my hand at two diagrams. The first indicates the relationships of

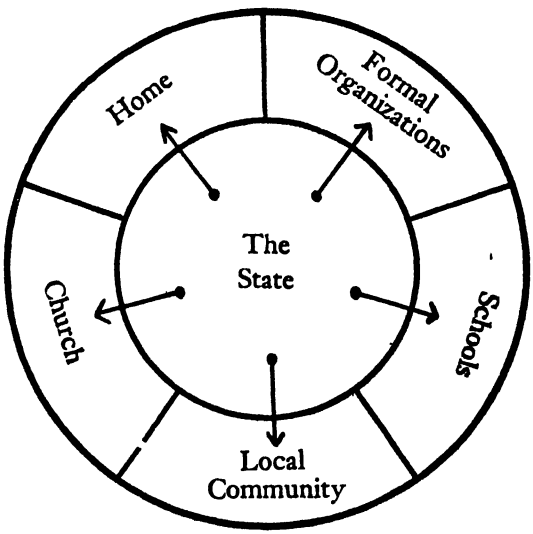

Fig. 1.—Primary and secondary institutions in the totalitarian society.

these institutions in the totalitarian society; the second, their relationships in the free society.

The emphasis in Figure 1 is that the state is central. It tries to destroy or to mould the home, the church, and the local community, as fits its purposes. It controls or creates formal organizations and schools as fits its purposes. There are no relationships between these institutions that do not go through the state, even if only to be permitted to do so.

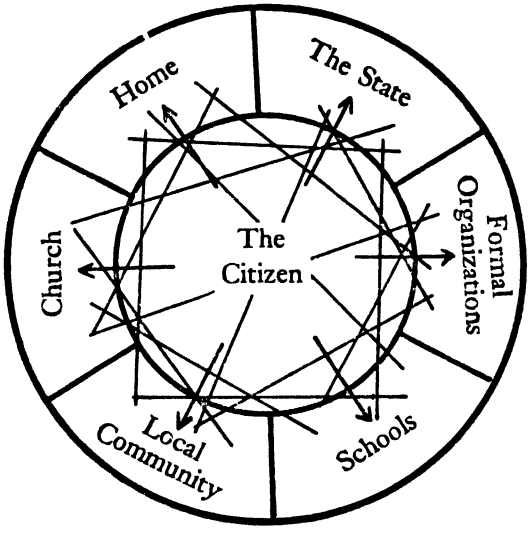

Fig. 2.—Primary and secondary institutions in the free society.

The considerably more complicated diagram, which is Figure 2, suggests four points. The first is that the individual citizen, not the state, is at the core. It is his responsibility to strengthen and adapt the suffering primary institutions of home, church, and local community and to control and employ the burgeoning secondary institutions of state, school, and formal organizations.

The second point is that all relationships between the several institutions pass through the individual citizen. That is, they do if he does his job well. If he does not, direct relationships will necessarily be established between the institutions and, finally, one or

another of them, most likely the state, will move into the central position. The importance of the mass media in the process of "society communicating" can be inferred from these diagrams, and so can the importance of the citizen's relationship with the mass media if the ideal represented in the second diagram is to be realized.

Third, a fundamental distinction between the totalitarian and the free society concerns voluntary activity. In the totalitarian society, voluntary activity is prohibited by the state, or it is suspiciously permitted within narrow limits, or it is put in harness; *all effective formal organizations are the creatures of the state. In the free society, the state as well as the other institutions is the creature of voluntary activity by the citizens.* This distinction should give a dignity to voluntary activity which its commonplaceness (to us) usually hides and an urgency which its voluntariness (to the unimaginative) usually obscures.

Fourth, it is "escapist" to count primarily on formal education to solve our problems. Formal education of children and youth can lay foundations for the future, but the issues of the present will not wait; moreover, the total environment is far more influential in the education of the immature than the segment of time and experience which is known as formal schooling. The *adult*, not the child, makes this environment—the home, the church, the local community, the state, the school itself, and the formal and informal organizations through which individual influences are joined and augmented. It is *adult*, not formal, education in which the immediate and continuing hope lies. It is through *adult* education that the mass media can be improved. It is in the service of *adult* education that the mass media can best serve the free society.

The Mass Media

GENERAL

One of the burdens of almost every chapter in this book, including the present one, is that using the mass media in the service of personal liberty and social responsibility is a difficult and complex process. But who, upon reflection, would have it otherwise? If it were easy to develop the individual and to form and direct the society, or if the mass media alone were enough, our cause would

certainly be lost, because the clever, the ambitious, and the unscrupulous would have achieved contrary purposes long ago. So let us be grateful for the difficulties. Dale (chap. xi) ironically comments on the Communist working hard "to make the inevitable inevitable." If one were to match ironies, he would put forth the person who believes in freedom of the will but does little to use it wisely or to help others expand the boundaries of choice.

The mass media are new—very new. Only the book, the magazine, and the newspaper antedate the present century, and during this century even these have increased greatly, both in effectiveness and in circulation. (The picture magazine, for example, dates from the late 'thirties.) The electronic media—the film, radio, and television; the combining of sound, sight, motion, and color—all are children of the present century. Dale (chap. xi) tells how the inventors of the film doubted its possibilities as a mass medium. Tyler (chap. v) relates that radio was first thought of for point-to-point broadcasting. The story of the mass impact of the electronic media begins with the second quarter of the twentieth century.

Research into the effects and experiments with the possibilities of the mass media are of very recent origin. The social sciences as a whole have barely begun to focus attention on the problem. It took the shocks of Fascism and Communism and World War II to awaken widespread interest among both specialists and laymen. The current confusion in all the media attest that none is yet sure of just what can be done best by each and just how the several effects can be used to best advantage, when singly and when in combinations of two or more. In so far as formal education in the United States has responded at all to the dangers and the opportunities of the mass media, that response has been made only recently. Adult education as a conscious movement in the United States is only slightly more than a quarter of a century old. It has not yet been recognized that adult education is everybody's business and that the mass media are supremely adapted to adult education.

All this adds up to the fact that the educational possibilities of the media of mass communications have only been scratched. They will be discovered and used only when tens of millions of persons turn their attention to the job, bringing to bear the richness of their varied concerns, desires, skills, and relationships.

One can confidently say that incredible results will be achieved. Smythe (chap. ix) writes, ". . . the TV and radio program content virtually ignores the whole areas of literature and the fine arts (other than music). Such culturally valuable material has not been regarded as attractive for commercial sponsorship. Whether under our system of broadcasting it *can* be included in our broadcast fare without diluting its uniqueness, its artistic merit, is an unsettled question; the argument is strong that it cannot. The fact remains that it is excluded." Smythe is right, of course, but this is the kind of fact that cannot be tolerated as conclusive, and there is no reason to so tolerate it. If our system of broadcasting cannot be changed, listeners and viewers can. Smythe excludes music. The number of our people who today enjoy and participate in good music and the number of programs of good music they have available to them—"live," on records, on radio, and even on TV—could not have been "extrapolated" from either the public tastes or the available fares thirty years ago. In the words of a popular song, with regard to music, there have been "some changes made." Schools, homes, communities, and the mass media combined to make these changes. They can make many more.

In preparation for specific suggestions, I make a number of comments about the mass media, some of which have been developed at greater length in other chapters in this volume.

1. The managers and operators of the mass media have a tough job. They have several objectives to pursue, not just one or two; these are often contradictory and always difficult to balance. These contradictions and difficulties are frequently reflections of stresses and strains, not just in the media, but in our society at large. For example, the problem of "objectivity" in the news.

The managers and operators of the mass media are but links in circular chains of influences. Often they feel more frustrated and helpless than anyone else, in the light of what they know they should do and would like to do. These mutually hampering circular chains of influence are our social checks and balances, the consequence of the wide diffusion of power, which is characteristic of a free society. No link can move far without the others, but together there is no limit to the distance they can move.

Citizens as educators—professional and lay, formal and informal—can affect the chain of influences in several ways: through the formation of standards of taste and responsibility in the home, church, school, and community; through the determination and administration of public policy; through response to the fare of the mass media; through "public service" programs over the mass media.

2. The degree of responsiveness to demands by the public (or, more accurately, publics) is much greater than the cynical or impatient believe. This is true generally (and we must always think generally at first, because we are dealing with the whole gamut of social factors, not just the mass media). Meditate for a moment on the deep and far-reaching changes in our government which have been peacefully made since 1928. Meditate on the social aspects of Allen's *Big Change* since 1900. There can be no doubt that our free institutions are more responsible than they were twenty, thirty, fifty years ago. Doubt that our mass media have become progressively more socially responsible will be allayed, I think, by a careful sampling of what they used to be at various intervals in the past. This is reason for encouragement, but not relaxation, because the need for responsibility has outpaced the development of responsibility.

Nevertheless, impressive improvements have been made. *Most of them have been brought about through appeals to professed ideals and to the sense of obligation and not through punitive action.* Many managers and operators of the mass media welcome help in being *permitted* to do better than they do, but not if they are approached as wrongdoers by self-righteous critics who have neither knowledge of nor sympathy with the realities which confront the managers and operators. These are particularly discouraged when their efforts for improvement are not recognized or are scorned or are not supported by those who have been adjuring improvement.

3. Bigness is with us to stay. War, peace, depression, prosperity, deflation, inflation—everything seems to contribute to the concentration of economic power, although on the mounting tide of economic activity opportunities for small and middle-sized enterprises are created in the interstices between the giant enterprises or as services to them. Bigness in the mass media is here to stay also.

Similarily, there are opportunities for littleness on the mounting cultural and intellectual tide. To cite examples: FM radio; educational radio and television; recordings; inexpensive, paper-bound books; magazines; and nontheatrical films—*but these can be effective only if significant minorities of taste rally to their support.*

4. I simply cannot accept the inevitability of the "consumer" of mass-media programs as passively helpless. He often, perhaps usually, is passively helpless. But he need not be. Excellence is usually available in one form or another, though to find it takes initiative and patience and perhaps some extra cost. All over the country in almost every field are individuals and agencies trying to provide and advance excellence. Twenty-five years of concerted attention in our formal schools and through adult education to what Dale (chap. xi) calls the teaching of discriminating taste would make the fare of our mass media unrecognizably higher.

5. As several writers in this volume have underscored, *the public* is to a great extent a myth, there are *publics*. And as other critics, notably Gilbert Seldes, have pointed out, publics are *made*, not *born*. The advertisers, managers, and operators of the mass media can, of course, exploit a public once created, but this public had to be brought into being in the first place. The commercial media have to make money to stay in business; hence they have to create various, large publics. For our free society to stay in business, large numbers of citizens must be alert, informed, thoughtful, and responsible; hence all of us have to create various publics for programs contributing to this end. There is no doubt that we can do so. The basic job—the creation of publics of desired kinds—is done continually; the more specific job—the creation of publics of the concerned and the discriminating—has been done many times, by the commercial media as well as by the noncommercial.

Several factors in our society should help us in our job. One is that our society is becoming more highly articulated into minorities more or less sharply conscious of their cohesion. This is inevitable as our society becomes older and as the division of functions becomes even finer. It is not necessarily bad; this depends on other questions: Does our society become ever more fluid? Is equality of opportunity advanced? Do larger loyalties tie us together? Are the members of the minorities responsible? And so on. The point is that the raw

materials exist for creating publics of minorities significant in size, in taste, and in influence.

Another factor is that as competition for publics between the media becomes ever more keen, it may become increasingly to the advantage of advertisers and the managers and operators of the mass media to appeal more and more often to significant minority publics rather than to the unarticulated majority public, only a fraction of which they can hope to reach at best anyway. Certainly this will be so if the creation of publics by the mass media is matched by vigorous and intelligent activity on the part of "consumers."

SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

The primary purpose of this chapter is to enlist the citizen in the search for ways of using the mass media in the service of democracy. It is not to explain "how to do it." There is no formula. Situations differ in time and place. The best ways and opportunities are yet to be discovered. Nevertheless, specific suggestions may be useful as illustrations and as blaze-marks.

Waymack [1] lists the first requirements for a hypothetical voluntary group wanting "more help and less handicap from the mass media":

> It must forget all thought of quick-and-easy achievement.
>
> It must understand the problems of the mass media and the way they work.
>
> It must make its plans and set its hope in the light of that understanding.
>
> It must equip itself not to beat down but to meet the conditions of mass media operation.

Let this serve as an introduction to my specific suggestions. Such phrases as "where possible" and "when appropriate" should be understood as qualifying all my points.

1. *Newspapers:*

a) Don't scorn the "letters to the editors." Write them and read them. Don't let this be chiefly the outlet for crackpots and the hot-headed. Write analysis and praise as well as protest and complaint.

b) Draw newspaper people at all levels into community activi-

[1] W. W. Waymack, "A Look at the Mass Media," *Adult Leadership*, II (July-August, 1953), 21-22.

ties—not to do "publicity work," but as equal colleagues. They may learn; you may learn.

c) In your activities, *make news*. Don't expect preferential treatment on the grounds of your high motives.

d) Explore the possibilities of a broadly based community advisory council. Some publishers and editors will resent this, but many, approached the right way, would not. A council of the right sort would be hard for a newspaper to ignore.

e) Explore the possibilities of co-operative programs between the newspaper and the schools, in which the press is used in the classroom and, more than incidentally, materials are produced for adult use also.

f) Call to newsmen's attention significant ideas, facts, trends, articles.

g) Read some good newspaper other than the local press, even if the latter is good.

Robert Lasch has written, "What the press in America needs is a constitutional revolution. It needs a measure of judicious abdication. It needs a transfer of power from publishers as kings to publishers and editors as prime ministers. It needs ownership that will give up the prerogatives of absolutism and function as a trustee recognizing direct responsibility to the people." The history of constitutional revolutions always includes the assumption of rights and responsibilities by the people, not simple abdication by the king.

2. *Radio:*

a) The first six of the suggestions concerning the newspaper have some relevance to commercial radio.

b) In a friendly way explore the thinking of commercial radio managers about the future of aural radio. With the advent of television, aural radio must find its unique function. In many instances this may include programs aimed at significant minorities.

c) Look into the possibilities of an FM radio station in your community which—one way or another (by contributions, by educational support, by support of manufacturers of FM receivers, or by advertising of music shops, bookstores, and newspapers)—broadcasts only programs of good music, news, literature, etc. If one exists, support it appropriately.

d) Become informed about the thinking of the noncommercial radio broadcasters in your community if there be such. Educational radio is undergoing a kind of renaissance at the present time.

e) Watch for good radio programs, regardless of origin, and try to have them broadcast and rebroadcast on both commercial and noncommercial stations.

3. *Television:*

a) The first six suggestions concerning newspapers have some relevance to commercial television also.

b) Become familiar with the thinking of commercial television managers concerning the future of television. It is young. Its managers and operators are still groping and are impressed with the power of the medium they control. An encouraging number of them are trying to set standards and explore possibilities. In St. Louis, meetings between the commercial television manager and the adult-education council resulted, first, in a series of imaginative public service programs and, later, in a committee which brought about a noncommercial television station.

c) Try to bring about relationships between educational institutions and agencies and commercial television stations. This should be done regardless of whether a community has a noncommercial station. Telecasting should not be separated into "educational" programs over noncommercial stations and "noneducational" programs over commercial stations. Influence on both broadcaster and viewer alike will probably be greatest when educational programs appear on commercial channels.

d) Inform yourself concerning noncommercial television, in general, and, in particular, the noncommercial channel assigned to your community, if there is one. The best sources of information are the Citizens Committee for Educational Television (Ring Building, Washington 6, D.C.) and the Joint Committee for Educational Television (1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C.). Satisfy yourself that all which should be done is being done or help to do it. If your community has or is on the way to getting a noncommercial station, pay attention to three problems: programming, audience, and support. Programming will be the crux of the future of educational television, over both commercial and noncommercial

stations, and only the co-ordinated and imaginative mobilization of the educational resources of a community will be adequate to the need and the opportunity.

e) Learn about the Center for Educational Television and Radio (1610 Washtenaw St., Ann Arbor, Michigan).

f) More generally, as in radio, watch for good television programs, regardless of source, and try to have them broadcast and rebroadcast on both commercial and noncommercial stations. The programs and the audience are what matters, and not words such as "commercial" and "noncommercial."

g) Learn and help your associates learn at least the "a-b-c's" of audio-visual presentation. This, clearly, is a new chapter in the skills of communication needed by every person, both as an individual and as a citizen in our "great society." The extension of outgoing communication is from simple writing and speaking to public speaking, to argumentation and debate, to discussion, and now to the dramatic presentation of ideas and information through the electronic media using one or more of sound, sight, motion, color, and probably dimension. A poor program whose intent is educational not only fails to accomplish its purpose but also ridicules the intent, diminishes the audience for the station as well as for the program and, in general, strengthens the case of the cynical and weakens the case of education and enlightenment by means of the mass media. The last sentence is as true of radio as it is of television, but the issues are heightened in television.

4. *Films:*

In the chapter "Teaching Discrimination in Motion Pictures," Dale has made several concrete suggestions concerning influencing the responsible producers of theatrical films; influencing the distributors and exhibitors; the use of shortened versions; and reruns of good pictures. I restrict myself to the nontheatrical use of films.

a) Help organize or work with a local film council or committee. Information concerning the many things it can do (film festivals, previewings, catalogues, co-operative rentals, sharing of equipment and operators, etc.) is available through the Film Council of America (600 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois).

b) Become "literate" with films—in your classes, organizations,

homes. View films; follow the developments of the field. (The Film Council of America will suggest magazines and newsletters.)

c) Experiment with the use of films as substitutes for or supplements to other types of programs and materials. Thousands of persons in meetings every week listen to pointless, dreary speeches when they could be viewing good films. For example, films can be used as the "kick off" to discussions.

d) Regard the portable projector and the 16-mm. film with great respect. If possible, purchase a projector for your home, agency, or organization and "get in the swim." Simultaneous progress on the fronts of production, distribution, and consumption could bring about far-reaching changes. Projectors in several millions of homes, offices and headquarters; films produced specifically for various kinds of adult audiences and for specific purposes, such as to elicit discussion; easily available information on films; a well-oiled distribution system; "films-of-the-week" clubs; co-operative purchase and exchange arrangements; even (if the economics of a wider market and technological improvement permit) small, home libraries of film classics—these and other developments are easily possible.

e) Be alert to the possibilities of secondary uses before small groups of the films or kinescopes of good television programs. A widespread secondary market of good educational programs would mightily improve the economics of educational television.

5. *Records and Recordings:*

The two waves of musical-record collections by private individuals and institutions, first, frangible fast-playing and, later, nonbreakable long-playing, point the way for following waves. I have seen recordings of the human voice by a new process which its inventors claim will produce records which may be sold for twenty-five or thirty-five cents and which, on their two sides, will contain an hour or more of narration or recitation. In the light of technological improvements in this field during the past 20 years, this does not seem an improbable claim. I hazard the prediction that something of this kind will be developed. We may soon see for sale in drugstores and at newsstands "talking books" of Robert Frost, The Psalms, "Don Juan in Hell," excerpts from *Moby Dick,* and, of course, Mickey Spillane. We may see private and public libraries of such

recordings comparable to present libraries of printed books and recorded music.

Regardless of prediction, several opportunities exist today.

a) Educational radio, as I have said, is undergoing a renaissance. Some of the best programs of the "tape network" can be purchased on records for use in schools and with small groups. This body of programs will doubtless be increasing. For information, write the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois. Outstanding sound volumes are also put out by some commercial companies.

b) The tape recorder affords many opportunities. Simple recording and play-back machines of excellent quality are moderately priced and easy to operate. Tapes may be used over and over. Samplings of things which may be done are:

The recording of broadcasts, for later play-back before families and small groups, of notable speeches and news events, excellent dramatizations, and musical programs.

The recording of nonbroadcast addresses, discussions, and the like, for passing around from organization to organization. In every community weekly, if not daily, programs which deserve wide and repeated use are put on before a single audience and are not made full use of because program chairmen are not familiar with the uses of the tape recorder and because of lack of communication between groups.

6. *Books and Magazines:*

The older media of books and magazines give the critics of the critics their best case. Despite bemoanings of the low cultural state of the American people, there undoubtedly is more good writing being done today than ever before. (I duck the question of the "greats.") And, although readership of serious books and magazines is also at a new peak, many books which deserve wide reading fall almost unnoticed into the river of publications, and several magazines which from the society's point of view are indispensable hang on, if they do, only by virtue of sacrifices by their publishers and writers. In this broad field I will make only a few scattered suggestions.

a) Follow news and reviews of books. Even the best book-

review columns and sections of the newspapers leave much to be desired. But they at least give useful information. And several magazines, notably *Harper's Magazine*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Yale Review*, *New Yorker*, and *Saturday Review of Literature* present criticism always at a respectable and often at a high level. Incidentally, for news and criticisms of the mass media generally the *Saturday Review* is probably the best.

b) Consider that a good bookstore in your community is an asset comparable to a good newspaper.

c) Know and support your library and defend the "freedom to read."

d) Sample various magazines. Subscribe to several and give gift subscriptions. When magazines like *Scientific American* and the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* have trouble surviving, as both have had in the past several years, the argument that excellence is not available sounds thin.

e) Become familiar with and support the development of inexpensive paper-bound books of high quality. This is an exciting and significant story. Parts of it are told in *The Wonderful World of Books* and in *Adult Education*, March, 1953. This particular issue is entirely devoted to "Adult Education and the Mass Media," and every article is sharply pertinent to our subject.

7. *The Relating of Mass Media to Study and Discussion:*

This huge subject is perhaps the most important and promising frontier of adult education today. It is an attempt to combine the impact, flexibility, economy, and range of the mass media, on the one hand, with the educative processes of personal participation (reading, reflection, the exchange of ideas and information, and the formulation and testing of conclusions), on the other hand. Vigorous experimentation is going on in this field. Two brief reports of successes can be found in the issue of *Adult Education* (March, 1953) referred to earlier—one by Ruth Ogden on an experimental film-discussion project, the second by Roby Kidd on the Canadian National Farm Radio Forum and Citizens Forum. Other promising experiments—for example, in San Bernardino, California, and Memphis, Tennessee, have not yet been publicly reported on.

These and other experiments cannot be described in detail here,

and nothing that has yet been done is probably anything more than indicative of what can be done. The only suggestion I make is that citizens address themselves to the problem of relating the mass media to study and discussion and play around with various ideas, formats, and combinations.

8. *The Organization of "Consumers" of the Mass Media:*

We have many examples in our history of citizens banding together to exert negative influences upon the mass media—boycotts, censorship, and the like. There are not many, but there are a few, examples of citizens organizing to exert a constructive influence. One of the bright examples is the twelve-year-old Wisconsin Association for Better Radio and Television. Its basic principles may be summarized as follows:

> The members must raise their own level of thinking and taste before they can raise the level of broadcasting.
>
> The Association should praise good programs more than they should denounce poor ones.
>
> The Association should search for effective ways of expressing themselves to persons who can change programs.
>
> The Association must be and remain objective.

The American Council for Better Broadcasts was organized upon these principles in May, 1953. I suggest that the reader write this new council (423 N. Pinkney, Madison, Wisconsin) to learn of its specific program.

The suggestions above are merely signposts to constructive individual and co-operative activity. I see no hope if the assumption is that good content and programs through the mass media can come only from benign despots dispensing high quality fare to a populace too undiscriminating to recognize opportunities for choice or too lazy to choose if it does recognize them. It is true that in many ways and situations, the diet provided by the mass media is poor or harmful. It is also true that not many informed, intelligent, concerted efforts have been made by the citizen consumers to remedy the situation. The little excursions into the possible, which I have made with regard to films and records, were for the purpose of pointing up the expansive and fluid state of affairs. I have refrained from discussing larger possibilities. The Christian Science Church

makes possible *The Monitor*. The American Jewish Committee makes possible *Commentary*. Catholic readers make possible *The Commonweal*. For years there has been talk of a national labor paper. Organized labor could, if it only would, make possible an excellent national newspaper. Several other organizations could, if they only would, make possible great additions to or improvements of the mass media. I have restricted myself to more modest possibilities, because to influence the mass media for the better is not easy, and disillusionment awaits the unrealistic. To hope for much and expect little, to value the little gained, to be imaginative and persistent—this is the correct approach.

Adult Education

The phrase in the last paragraph, "could if they only would," calls attention to the heart of the problem of improving the mass media. It is to improve the individual citizen. Formal education can lay the groundwork; the chapters by Dale and Stensland are rich in suggestions concerning what can be done with the mass media in schools. But the edifice to be built upon that groundwork is education as a life-long process. Was it because we assumed that education could stop with formal schooling that adult education has received not even a small fraction of the attention that education for the young has received? Or was it because we assumed that formal schooling would equip young people to continue their educations on their own? Regardless of the reason, the American people are only now turning attention to the needs of their adult population to educate themselves throughout life. These needs are not just to remedy the deficiencies of formal schooling; they are not just to improve economic status; they are not just to use leisure time; they are not just for recreation or for mental health, important as all these purposes are. The needs are for the realization of personality and the exercise of our rights and duties as free men. Appropriate and adequate adult education will not come about automatically any more than will appropriate and adequate formal education of the young. Nobody, whether formal educator or alert citizen, can consider the problem of the mass media without quickly running into his responsibility to concern himself with adult education—for himself and for others. This has been under-

scored repeatedly in this volume. First, the citizen must *understand;* second, the citizen must influence by *persuasion* and *example;* third, the citizen must *act* wisely in co-operation with others.

This cycle of understanding, persuasion, and action usually takes place within the context of the local community. I illustrate from my suggestions: an advisory council for newspaper, radio station, or television station; a film council or committee; a council or committee for better broadcasts. Other needs come rapidly to mind: the need for a council or committee to promote an understanding of world affairs; the need for communication between groups and organizations having programs; the need for a council or committee to bring to bear through the mass media the resources of educational institutions and agencies. In short, the need for a focus of the community paying attention to the educational needs and opportunities of the entire adult population.

This brings together all the factors of the communicative process outlined by Schramm and Fearing—the individual, his situation, the group environment, and the message. Nothing less is adequate. And, to return to the original theme of this chapter, nothing less is at stake than the fate of the individual personality and the future of self-government.

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CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION

(As adopted May, 1944, and amended June, 1945, and February, 1949)

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this corporation shall be "The National Society for the Study of Education," an Illinois corporation not for profit.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSES

Its purposes are to carry on the investigation of educational problems, to publish the results of same, and to promote their discussion.

The corporation also has such powers as are now, or may hereafter be, granted by the General Not For Profit Corporation Act of the State of Illinois.

ARTICLE III

OFFICES

The corporation shall have and continuously maintain in this state a registered office and a registered agent whose office is identical with such registered office, and may have other offices within or without the State of Illinois as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. *Classes.* There shall be two classes of members—active and honorary. The qualifications and rights of the members of such classes shall be as follows:

(*a*) Any person who is desirous of promoting the purposes of this corporation is eligible to active membership and shall become such on payment of dues as prescribed.

(*b*) Active members shall be entitled to vote, to participate in discussion, and, subject to the conditions set forth in Article V, to hold office.

(*c*) Honorary members shall be entitled to all the privileges of active members, with the exception of voting and holding office, and shall be exempt from the payment of dues. A person may be elected to honorary membership by vote of the active members of the corporation on nomination by the Board of Directors.

(*d*) Any active member of the Society may, at any time after reaching the age of sixty, become a life member on payment of the aggregate amount of the regular annual dues for the period of life expectancy, as determined by standard actuarial tables, such membership to entitle the member to receive all yearbooks and to enjoy all other privileges of active membership in the Society for the lifetime of the member.

Section 2. *Termination of Membership.*

(*a*) The Board of Directors by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the Board may suspend or expel a member for cause after appropriate hearing.

(*b*) Termination of membership for nonpayment of dues shall become effective as provided in Article XIV.

Section 3. *Reinstatement.* The Board of Directors may by the affirmation vote of two-thirds of the members of the Board reinstate a former member whose membership was previously terminated for cause other than nonpayment of dues.

Section 4. *Transfer of Membership.* Membership in this corporation is not transferable or assignable

Article V

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. *General Powers.* The business and affairs of the corporation shall be managed by its Board of Directors. It shall appoint the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors, the Secretary-Treasurer, and Members of the Council. It may appoint a member to fill any vacancy on the Board until such vacancy shall have been filled by election as provided in Section 3 of this Article.

Section 2 *Number, Tenure, and Qualifications.* The Board of Directors shall consist of seven members, namely, six to be elected by the members of the corporation, and the Secretary-Treasurer to be the seventh member. Only active members who have contributed to the Yearbook shall be eligible for election to serve as directors. A member who has been elected for a full term of three years as director and has not attended at least two-thirds of the meetings duly called and held during that term shall not be eligible for election again before the fifth annual election after the expiration of the term for which he was first elected. No member who has been elected for two full terms as director in immediate succession shall be elected a director for a term next succeeding. This provision shall not apply to the Secretary-Treasurer who is appointed by the Board of Directors. Each director shall hold office for the term for which he is elected or appointed and until his successor shall have been selected and qualified. Directors need not be residents of Illinois.

Section 3. *Election.*

(*a*) The directors named in the Articles of Incorporation shall hold office until their successors shall have been duly selected and shall have qualified.

Thereafter, two directors shall be elected annually to serve three years, beginning March first after their election. If, at the time of any annual election, a vacancy exists in the Board of Directors, a director shall be elected at such election to fill such vacancy.

(*b*) Elections of directors shall be held by ballots sent by United States mail as follows: A nominating ballot together with a list of members eligible to be directors shall be mailed by the Secretary-Treasurer to all active members of the corporation in October. From such list, the active members shall nominate on such ballot one eligible member for each of the two regular terms and for any vacancy to be filled and return such ballots to the office of the Secretary-Treasurer within twenty-one days after said date of mailing by the Secretary-Treasurer The Secretary-Treasurer shall prepare an election ballot and place thereon in alphabetical order the names of persons equal to three times the number of offices to be filled, these persons to be those who received the highest number of votes on the nominating ballot, provided, however, that not more than one person connected with a given institution or agency shall be named on such final ballot, the person so named to be the one receiving the highest vote on the nominating ballot. Such election ballot shall be mailed by the Secretary-Treasurer to all active members in November next succeeding. The active members shall vote thereon for one member for each such office. Election ballots must be in the office of the Secretary-Treasurer within twenty-one days after the said date of mailing by the Secretary-Treasurer. The ballots shall be counted by the Secretary-Treasurer, or by an election committee, if any, appointed by the Board The two members receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected for the regular term and the member or members receiving the next highest number of votes shall be declared elected for any vacancy or vacancies to be filled.

Section 4 *Regular Meetings.* A regular annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held, without other notice than this by-law, at the same place and as nearly as possible on the same date as the annual meeting of the corporation The Board of Directors may provide the time and place, either within or without the State of Illinois, for the holding of additional regular meetings of the Board.

Section 5. *Special Meetings.* Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by or at the request of the Chairman or a majority of the directors. Such special meetings shall be held at the office of the corporation unless a majority of the directors agree upon a different place for such meetings.

Section 6. *Notice.* Notice of any special meeting of the Board of Directors shall be given at least fifteen days previously thereto by written notice delivered personally or mailed to each director at his business address, or by telegram. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail in a sealed envelope so addressed, with postage thereon prepaid. If notice be given by telegram, such notice shall be deemed

to be delivered when the telegram is delivered to the telegraph company. Any director may waive notice of any meeting. The attendance of a director at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, any regular or special meeting of the Board need be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting.

Section 7. *Quorum.* A majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board, provided, that if less than a majority of the directors are present at said meeting, a majority of the directors present may adjourn the meeting from time to time without further notice.

Section 8. *Manner of Acting.* The act of the majority of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors, except where otherwise provided by law or by these by-laws.

Article VI

THE COUNCIL

Section 1. *Appointment.* The Council shall consist of the Board of Directors, the Chairmen of the corporation's Yearbook and Research Committees, and such other active members of the corporation as the Board of Directors may appoint.

Section 2. *Duties.* The duties of the Council shall be to further the objects of the corporation by assisting the Board of Directors in planning and carrying forward the educational undertakings of the corporation.

Article VII

OFFICERS

Section 1. *Officers.* The officers of the corporation shall be a Chairman of the Board of Directors, a Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors, and a Secretary-Treasurer. The Board of Directors, by resolution, may create additional offices. Any two or more offices may be held by the same person, except the offices of Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer.

Section 2. *Election and Term of Office.* The officers of the corporation shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors at the annual regular meeting of the Board of Directors, provided, however, that the Secretary-Treasurer may be elected for a term longer than one year. If the election of officers shall not be held at such meeting, such election shall be held as soon thereafter as conveniently may be. Vacancies may be filled or new offices created and filled at any meeting of the Board of Directors. Each officer shall hold office until

his successor shall have been duly elected and shall have qualified or until his death or until he shall resign or shall have been removed in the manner hereinafter provided.

Section 3. *Removal.* Any officer or agent elected or appointed by the Board of Directors may be removed by the Board of Directors whenever in its judgment the best interests of the corporation would be served thereby, but such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the person so removed.

Section 4. *Chairman of the Board of Directors.* The Chairman of the Board of Directors shall be the principal officer of the corporation. He shall preside at all meetings of the members of the Board of Directors, shall perform all duties incident to the office of Chairman of the Board of Directors and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors from time to time.

Section 5. *Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors.* In the absence of the Chairman of the Board of Directors or in the event of his inability or refusal to act, the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors shall perform the duties of the Chairman of the Board of Directors, and when so acting, shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the Chairman of the Board of Directors. Any Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the Board of Directors.

Section 6. *Secretary-Treasurer.* The Secretary-Treasurer shall be the managing executive officer of the corporation. He shall: (*a*) keep the minutes of the meetings of the members and of the Board of Directors in one or more books provided for that purpose; (*b*) see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these by-laws or as required by law; (*c*) be custodian of the corporate records and of the seal of the corporation and see that the seal of the corporation is affixed to all documents, the execution of which on behalf of the corporation under its seal is duly authorized in accordance with the provisions of these by-laws; (*d*) keep a register of the postoffice address of each member as furnished to the secretary-treasurer by such member; (*e*) in general perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the Chairman of the Board of Directors or by the Board of Directors. He shall also: (1) have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of the corporation; receive and give receipts for moneys due and payable to the corporation from any source whatsoever, and deposit all such moneys in the name of the corporation in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of Article XI of these by-laws; (2) in general perform all the duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the Chairman of the Board of Directors or by the Board of Directors. The Secretary-Treasurer shall give a bond for the faithful discharge of his

duties in such sum and with such surety or sureties as the Board of Directors shall determine, said bond to be placed in the custody of the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Article VIII

COMMITTEES

The Board of Directors, by appropriate resolution duly passed, may create and appoint such committees for such purposes and periods of time as it may deem advisable.

Article IX

PUBLICATIONS

Section 1. The corporation shall publish *The Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education,* such supplements thereto, and such other materials as the Board of Directors may provide for.

Section 2. *Names of Members.* The names of the active and honorary members shall be printed in the Yearbook.

Article X

ANNUAL MEETINGS

The corporation shall hold its annual meetings at the time and place of the Annual Meeting of the American Association of School Administrators of the National Education Association. Other meetings may be held when authorized by the corporation or by the Board of Directors.

Article XI

CONTRACTS, CHECKS, DEPOSITS, AND GIFTS

Section 1. *Contracts.* The Board of Directors may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents of the corporation, in addition to the officers so authorized by these by-laws to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the corporation and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

Section 2. *Checks, drafts, etc.* All checks, drafts, or other orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the corporation, shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the corporation and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors. In the absence of such determination of the Board of Directors, such instruments shall be signed by the Secretary-Treasurer.

Section 3. *Deposits.* All funds of the corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board of Directors may select.

Section 4. *Gifts.* The Board of Directors may accept on behalf of the corporation any contribution, gift, bequest, or device for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the corporation.

Article XII

BOOKS AND RECORDS

The corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of its members, Board of Directors, and committees having any of the authority of the Board of Directors, and shall keep at the registered or principal office a record giving the names and addresses of the members entitled to vote. All books and records of the corporation may be inspected by any member or his agent or attorney for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

Article XIII

FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the corporation shall begin on the first day of July in each year and end on the last day of June of the following year.

Article XIV

DUES

Section 1. *Annual Dues.* The annual dues for active members of the Society shall be determined by vote of the Board of Directors at a regular meeting duly called and held.

Section 2. *Election Fee.* An election fee of $1.00 shall be paid in advance by each applicant for active membership.

Section 3. *Payment of Dues* Dues for each calendar year shall be payable in advance on or before the first day of January of that year. Notice of dues for the ensuing year shall be mailed to members at the time set for mailing the primary ballots.

Section 4. *Default and Termination of Membership.* Annual membership shall terminate automatically for those members whose dues remain unpaid after the first day of January of each year. Members so in default will be reinstated on payment of the annual dues plus a reinstatement fee of fifty cents.

Article XV

SEAL

The Board of Directors shall provide a corporate seal which shall be in the form of a circle and shall have inscribed thereon the name of the corporation and the words "Corporate Seal, Illinois."

Article XVI

WAIVER OF NOTICE

Whenever any notice whatever is required to be given under the provision of the General Not For Profit Corporation Act of Illinois or under the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation or the by-laws of the corporation, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice.

Article XVII

AMENDMENTS

Section 1. *Amendments by Directors.* The constitution and by-laws may be altered or amended at any meeting of the Board of Directors duly called and held, provided that an affirmative vote of at least five directors shall be required for such action.

Section 2. *Amendments by Members.* By petition of twenty-five or more active members duly filed with the Secretary-Treasurer, a proposal to amend the constitution and by-laws shall be submitted to all active members by United States mail together with ballots on which the members shall vote for or against the proposal. Such ballots shall be returned by United States mail to the office of the Secretary-Treasurer within twenty-one days after date of mailing of the proposal and ballots by the Secretary-Treasurer. The Secretary-Treasurer or a committee appointed by the Board of Directors for that purpose shall count the ballots and advise the members of the result. A vote in favor of such proposal by two-thirds of the members voting thereon shall be required for adoption of such amendment.

MINUTES OF THE ATLANTIC CITY MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 14 AND 17, 1953

The first session of the Society's meeting was held in the American Room at the Traymore Hotel at 8:00 P.M., Saturday, February 14. This session was devoted to the discussion of the Fifty-second Yearbook, Part I, *Adapting the Secondary-School Program to the Needs of Youth,* which was prepared by a committee of the Society under the chairmanship of Professor William G. Brink of Northwestern University.

The meeting was called to order by the presiding officer, Professor Edgar Dale, Chairman of the Society's Board of Directors, and the following program was presented.

I. Introducing the Yearbook
   William G. Brink, Professor of Education, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois; Chairman of the Yearbook Committee

II. Social Implications of a Secondary-School Program to Meet the Needs of Youth
   C. C. Trillingham, County Superintendent of Schools, Los Angeles, California

III. Problems of the Classroom Teacher in Relation to the Needs of Youth
   Lloyd S. Michael, Superintendent, Evanston Township High School, Evanston, Illinois

IV. Evaluating Secondary-School Programs in Terms of the Needs of Youth
   Mark W. Bills, Superintendent of Schools, Kansas City, Missouri

V. Informal Discussion
   Led by Chairman of the Yearbook Committee

The second session was held Tuesday, February 17, at 2:30 P.M., in Room 17 of the Atlantic City Auditorium. The meeting was devoted to a discussion of Part II of the Fifty-second Yearbook, *The Community School.* This volume was prepared by a committee of the Society under the chairmanship of Professor Maurice F. Seay of the University of Chicago. Professor Edgar Dale, Chairman of the Board of Directors, presided over this meeting. The following program was presented.

I. Introducing the Yearbook
   Maurice F. Seay, Chairman, Department of Education, University of Chicago; Chairman of the Yearbook Committee

II. The Community-School Concept in the Administration of a Local School System
   Roy E. Robinson, Superintendent of Schools, Ferndale, Michigan

III. The Role of the Community School in the Organization of a State School System

J. Cayce Morrison, Assistant Commissioner for Research, State Education Department, Albany, New York

IV. The Community-School Program in Relation to the Services of Other Social Agencies

Cleo W. Blackburn, Director, Flanner House, Indianapolis, Indiana

V. Informal Discussion

Led by Chairman of the Yearbook Committee

SYNOPSIS OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SOCIETY FOR 1953

I. Meeting of February 15 at Atlantic City

The Board of Directors met at the Ambassador Hotel, the following members being present: Brownell, Dale (*Chairman*), Douglass, Strang, Tyler, Witty, and Henry (*Secretary*).

1. The Secretary reported that, as a result of the November election of members of the Board of Directors, Dean Melby of New York University and Dean Olson of the University of Michigan were elected for the three-year term beginning March 1, 1953.

2. Officers of the Board of Directors for the ensuing year were chosen as follows: Brownell, Chairman; Witty, Vice-chairman; and Henry, Secretary.

3. Mr. Brownell reported that the committee on Lay-Professional Cooperation in Education is keeping up with its scheduled program relating to the preparation of the yearbook. Special mention was made of the January 30 meeting of the committee in Denver as guests of the National Citizens Commission for Public Schools and the helpful suggestions regarding our yearbook that were offered by members of the Citizens Commission.

4. Mr Dale explained the plan of organization of the yearbook on Mass Media and Education and reported that all chapters contemplated will be completed by the time the manuscripts are required for final editing

5. Mr. Witty presented an outline of the proposed yearbook on Mental Health in Modern Education. This outline was developed in light of suggestions offered by consultants attending a dinner conference in Evanston, January 25. The Board approved the outline and requested Mr. Witty to serve as chairman of the yearbook committee. The members of the committee were duly chosen and an appropriation authorized for the expense of committee meetings. This volume is scheduled for publication in February, 1955.

6. The Secretary explained that the previously approved volume to be published in 1955 is the yearbook on Educational Philosophy. Professor Brubacher, chairman of the committee for this yearbook, reported that all chapter assignments have been accepted and that the manuscripts will be available as scheduled.

7. Professor Moehlman came to the Board meeting for a brief discussion of several points brought out in his interviews with specialists in comparative education and related subjects. The Board requested him to make further inquiry and to present a revised statement of his proposal for a yearbook in this field.

8. The Board reviewed Professor Grim's report of his impressions following a series of five small-group conferences on the subject of the Preservice

Education of Teachers. The Secretary was instructed to transmit the Board's comments on the major features of Professor Grim's report and to request him to submit a more specific proposal for consideration at a later meeting.

II. Meeting of May 30-31 at Chicago

The Board of Directors met at the Shoreland Hotel, the following members being present: Brownell (*Chairman*), Dale, Melby, Olson, Strang, Witty, and Henry (*Secretary*).

1. Mr. Witty presented a report of progress on the planning of the yearbook on Mental Health in Modern Education. The Board approved the committee's schedule for preparation of the manuscript and review of the chapters by members of the committee.

2. Mr. Dale reported that all chapters of the yearbook on Mass Media and Education were completed in time for the committee to review them at its meeting in Urbana on May 23.

3. The Secretary reported that the complete manuscript of the yearbook on Lay-Professional Co-operation in Public School Education had been forwarded by Mr. Morphet, chairman of the yearbook committee. Mention was made of the fact that questions have been raised from time to time about the title of this yearbook. Mr. Brownell explained that the committee had considered other titles but had not regarded any other suggestion as satisfactory. It was then proposed that Mr. Morphet be requested to solicit additional suggestions from members of the committee and other interested persons.

4. In response to questions and suggestions received from time to time regarding the format of the Society's yearbooks, the University of Chicago Press was invited to submit illustrations of possible improvements in the appearance of these volumes. Accordingly, Mr. Grodzins, Editor, and Mr. Allen, Typographer, presented specimens and layouts at this meeting, indicating desirable changes that may be made without increasing the cost of manufacture of the yearbooks. The Board voted approval of these suggestions and authorized the necessary changes in the printing and binding of the volumes to be published in 1954 and thereafter.

5. The Secretary presented a report on the operating expenses of the Society. In view of the continuing increase in the cost of materials and services involved in the preparation and manufacture of the yearbooks, the Board voted to increase the membership dues from $3.00 to $4.00 per year, beginning January 1, 1954.

6. In preparation for the two program meetings to be held in Atlantic City next February, Mr. Brownell presented the suggestions of the committee for the yearbook on Lay-Professional Co-operation in Public School Education, and Mr. Dale offered suggestions of the Committee on Mass Media and Education. These suggestions were approved.

Professor Grim presented further recommendations regarding the proposed yearbook on Preservice Education of Teachers. He was then requested

to revise the outline in light of suggestions offered by members of the Board and to forward his material to the office of the Secretary by the first of July.

8. Some comments on the earlier consideration of the possible desirability of publishing a yearbook on Adult Education led to the suggestion that a yearbook on adult reading would probably meet a more pressing need in the immediate future. The Chairman appointed Messrs. Dale and Witty as a special committee to inquire regarding the possible co-operation of competent persons in the preparation of a yearbook on this subject.

III. Meeting of October 18 at Chicago

The Board of Directors met at the Shoreland Hotel, the following members being present: Brownell (*Chairman*), Dale, Melby, Olson, Witty, and Henry (*Secretary*).

1. The Secretary reported that manufacturing schedules for the two volumes of the yearbook for 1954 provide for the distribution of these volumes to members of the Society about one month before the annual meeting, which will be held on February 13 in Atlantic City.

2. The Secretary announced the change in the proposed title of Part I of the yearbook for 1954, which has been designated "Lay-Professional Co-operation in Education" Pursuant to the request of the Board of Directors, Mr Morphet, chairman of the committee for this yearbook, polled members of the committee and other interested parties with respect to their preferences of possible titles for this volume. As a result of these consultations, it was decided to change the title to read: *Citizen Co-operation for Better Public Schools.*

3. Mr. Brownell, reporting for the committee on Citizen Co-operation for Better Public Schools, stated that all details of the program for presentation of Part I of the 1954 yearbook have been completed. Mr. Dale reported that the program for presentation of Part II has been fully formulated but that some places on the program have not been filled.

4. A communication sent by Professor Brubacher was read by the Secretary. As chairman of the committe on Educational Philosophy, Professor Brubacher reported that progress up to this time indicates that the manuscript will be completed in advance of the scheduled deadline.

5. Mr. Witty reported the results of the recent meeting of the committee on Mental Hygiene in Modern Education. It was noted that acceptances had been received from the selected contributors for all of the chapters and that a definite schedule has been set up for further work involved in preparation of the manuscript for the yearbook.

6. Messrs. Dale and Witty, acting as the special committee for inquiry concerning the desirability of undertaking the preparation of a yearbook on adult reading, reported that a conference on this subject was held in Evanston on August 1. In the course of this conference, it was suggested that consideration be given to the possible interest of libraries and library schools in

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a publication of the type that the National Society might sponsor. The Secretary was then requested to confer with Dean Asheim of the University of Chicago Graduate Library School. As a result, Dean Asheim was present at the October meeting of the Board of Directors and offered many valuable suggestions. Messrs. Dale and Witty were instructed to confer with the executive secretary of the American Library Association at their convenience and to report to the Board at its next meeting.

7. Professor B. Lamar Johnson recently proposed a yearbook on the junior college. At the request of the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Professor Johnson prepared a detailed outline of the plan of organization he considers most appropriate. This outline was reviewed and several suggestions offered by members of the Board. It was then decided to request Professor Johnson to call a conference at Los Angeles for consideration of possible modifications of the outline. The Board suggested several consultants and requested Mr. Brownell to represent the Board of Directors at the conference.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER OF THE SOCIETY

1952–53

Receipts and Disbursements

Receipts:	
Membership dues	$10,666.75
Sale of yearbooks	25,904 45
Interest and dividends on securities	755 95
Sale of securities	2,966.78
Miscellaneous	259.42
	$40,553.35
Disbursements:	
Yearbooks:	
Manufacturing	$13,077.51
Reprinting	13,696 03
Preparation	4,477.27
Meetings of Society and Board of Directors	2,147.76
Secretary's Office:	
Editorial, secretarial, and clerical service	10,355.16
Supplies	1,601.37
Equipment	710 09
Telephone and telegraph	70.51
Miscellaneous	694.17
	$46,829.87
Cash in banks at beginning of year	$ 6,524.74
Excess of disbursements over receipts	6,276.52
Cash in bank at end of year	$ 248.22

STATEMENT OF CASH AND SECURITIES

As of June 30, 1953

Cash:

University National Bank, Chicago, Illinois—
Checking account ..... $ 248.22

Securities:

Bonds	Cost
$17,700 U.S. of America Savings Bonds, Series "G", 2½%, due 12 years from issue date	17,700.00
$1,000 dated September 1, 1943	
$1,500 dated February 1, 1944	
$2,700 dated May 1, 1944	
$2,000 dated February 1, 1945	
$1,000 dated April 1, 1945	
$4,500 dated December 1, 1945	
$5,000 dated February 1, 1949	
Stock:	
25 shares First National Bank of Boston, Capital Stock	1,031.25
Total securities	$18,731 25
Total assets	$18,979 47

Nelson B Henry, *Treasurer*

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION

(This list includes all persons enrolled December 1, 1953, whether for 1953 or 1954. Asterisk (*) indicates Life Members of the Society.)

ACTIVE MEMBERS

Aarestad, Amanda B., Elem. Educ., State Teachers College, Winona, Minn.
Aaron, Ira E., College of Education, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga.
Abate, Harry, Principal, Niagara Street School, Niagara Falls, N.Y.
Abbott, Samuel L., Jr., Radford State Teachers College, Radford, Va.
Abel, Frederick P, University of Minnesota High School, Minneapolis, Minn.
Abelson, Harold H, College of the City of New York, New York, N.Y.
Abernethy, Ethel M., Queens College, Charlotte, N.C.
Abraham, Willard, Arizona State College, Tempe, Ariz.
Achariu, K S, Basic Training Centre, Vidyanagar P.O., Mysore State, India
Adams, Mrs. Daisy Trice, Principal, Charles Sumner School, Kansas City, Mo.
Adams, Mildred E., 210 S Main Street, Glassboro, N J.
Adams, Robert G., Principal, Lincoln School, Oakland, Calif.
Adams, Wayne, Dir, Tchr. Educ, No Texas State Col., Denton, Tex.
Addelston, Lorraine W., Principal, Public School 89, Queens, Elmhurst, N.Y.
Addicott, Irwin O., Fresno State College, Fresno, Calif.
Adelaide, Marie, Sister, Our Lady of the Lake College, San Antonio, Tex.
Adell, James C., Bureau of Educ. Research, Bd. of Educ., Cleveland, Ohio
Adlerblum, Yetta, 535 West 110th St, New York, N.Y.
Adolphsen, Louis John, Albert Lea Senior High School, Albert Lea, Minn.
Agnes, Sister St. Joseph's Academy, Crookston, Minn.
Ahearn, John J., Principal, Elementary School, Lacombe, La.
Ahmann, J Stanley, Sch of Educ, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.
Albin, Floyd B, Oregon College of Education, Monmouth, Ore.
Albright, Frank S, Supv., Secondary Education, Public Schools, Gary, Ind.
Albright, M Aline, Prof of Education, Marquette Univ., Milwaukee, Wis.
Alcorn, Marvin D., San Diego State College, San Diego, Calif.
Aldrich, Frederic D., 1054 Greyton Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio
Alexander, Jean H, Col of Educ., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn
Alexander, William M, School of Educ, Univ. of Miami, Coral Gables, Fla.
Allen, Beatrice Ona, Principal, Waters Elementary School, Chicago, Ill.
Allen, D W., Director of Educ., Ohio State Reformatory, Mansfield, Ohio
Allen, Edward E, Supv. Principal of Schools, Akron, N.Y.
Allen, Herbert E, Superintendent of Schools, Rifle, Colo.
Allen, James Robert, Curriculum Consultant, Public Schools, Louisville, Ky
Allen, Ross L, Prof of Health Educ., State Teachers College, Cortland, N Y
Allen, William H, Bur. of Audio-Vis Instr., Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis
Almerantz, Mrs Georgia, Box 87, Marseilles, Ill.
Alt, Pauline M., Teachers Col of Connecticut, New Britain, Conn
Altena, Juul V. R, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn.
Amar, Wesley F., 8306 S. Maryland Ave, Chicago, Ill.
Amberson, Jean D., Home Econ Bldg, Pa. State Col, State College, Pa.
Amundson, Carl L., Long Beach State College, Long Beach, Calif.
Anderson, Ernest M, Kansas State Teachers College, Pittsburg, Kan.
Anderson, G Lester, Dean, University of Buffalo, Buffalo, N Y
Anderson, Harold A., Dept. of Educ., Univ. of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
Anderson, Harold H., Head, Psych Dept., Mich State Col, East Lansing, Mich
Anderson, Harry D, Supt, Maine Township High School, Des Plaines, Ill.
Anderson, Hayden L V., Caribou School Dept, Caribou, Me
Anderson, Howard R, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C.
Anderson, John E., Dir., Inst. of Child Wel., Univ. of Minn., Minneapolis, Minn

Anderson, Keneuth E., Dean, Sch. of Educ., Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, Kan.
Anderson, Marion, Ginn & Company, Boston, Mass.
Anderson, Philip S, State Teachers College, River Falls, Wis.
Anderson, Robert Henry, Superintendent of Schools, Park Forest, Ill.
Anderson, Vernon E, School of Educ, Univ. of Connecticut, Storrs, Conn.
Anderson, Walter A, Sch. of Educ, New York University, New York, N.Y.
Anderson, William H., Principal, Park Hill School, Denver, Colo
Anderson, William Harold, Principal, Cooley School, North Kansas City, Mo.
Anderson, William P., Sch of Educ., Univ. of No. Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.
Andes, J. D., Dir., Elem Educ., Richmond Schools, Richmond, Calif.
Andrews, Annie, Supt. of Educ, Amite Schools, Liberty, Miss
Angell, George W., State Teachers College, New Paltz, N.Y
Angell, John H, 1109 Minnesota Ave., Bemidji Minn
Angelo, Rev Mark V., Dept of Educ., Siena College, Loudonville, N Y.
Annan, Isabel D, Principal, Gladstone School, Chicago, Ill.
Annis, Floyd M, Principal, Culver Public Schools, Culver, Ind.
Ansel, James O, Western Michigan College of Education, Kalamazoo, Mich.
Antell, Henry, 120 Kenilworth Pl, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Anthony, John J, University Village, Unit MB, Minneapolis, Minn.
Apple, Joe A, San Diego State College, San Diego, Calif
Appleby, Mrs May A., Macon Dr, Box 477, R. 9, Atlanta, Ga.
Appleton, David, Superintendent of Schools, Conway, N H
Aram, M., Research Asst, Bur of Educ, Ohio State Univ. Columbus, Ohio
Arbuckle, Dugald S, Sch of Educ, Boston University, Boston, Mass
Archer, Clifford P., Col of Educ., Univ of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn
Armstrong, Grace, State Teachers College, Mankato, Minn
Armstrong, V L, 1510 Brentwood St, Austin, Texas
Arnaud, E E., Supt., Edgewood School District, San Antonio, Tex.
Arnesen, Arthur E, Supv, Curriculum and Research, Salt Lake City, Utah
Arnold, Mabel, Dept of Educ, Earlham College, Richmond, Ind.
Arny, Clara Brown, University Farm, Univ. of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minn.
Arrant, Mrs Maeleen C, A M & N College, Pine Bluff, Ark.
Arsenian, Seth, Springfield College, Springfield, Mass
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